

## **ABSTRACT**

Heath A. Brewer, DEVELOPING A COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAM FOR ENGLISH LEARNER INSTRUCTION AT THE INDIVIDUAL SCHOOL LEVEL: A CHALLENGE IN SAMPSON COUNTY SCHOOLS (Under the direction of Dr. James McDowelle). Department of Educational Leadership, March 2019.

This study utilized Professional Learning Communities (PLC) of English Learner (EL) teachers in a collaborative process in the Union sub-district of Sampson County Schools to develop an EL Plan of Instruction. This group of educators utilized the North Carolina Standard Course of Study for English Language Arts (NCSCS: ELA) as the basis for this plan of instruction. Data from North Carolina End of Grade exams (EOGs) from the 2017-2018 school year, and NC Check-Ins 1 and 2 from the 2018-2019 school year provided detail to ascertain the early effectiveness of the program. These data indicated positive growth in proficiency among the EL population at the feeder schools for Union High School.

The possible introduction of several programs of EL instruction utilized in school systems around the United States were discussed and eliminated as potential improvements to the system of EL instruction used by Sampson County Schools. As predetermined by the Local Education Agency, consideration was given to the prohibitive costs associated with these programs and the lack of personnel to implement them in developing the EL Plan of Instruction, but major consideration was given to the major effectiveness of this plan. The implications indicated by the study included: the impact of economic limitations of the district; the effect of personnel changes on the implementation of new educational programs; the impact of weather on the school calendar; and the length of the program study.



DEVELOPING A COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAM FOR ENGLISH LEARNER  
INSTRUCTION AT THE INDIVIDUAL SCHOOL LEVEL: A CHALLENGE IN SAMPSON  
COUNTY SCHOOLS

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The Faculty of the Department of Educational Leadership  
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by

Heath A. Brewer

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## **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

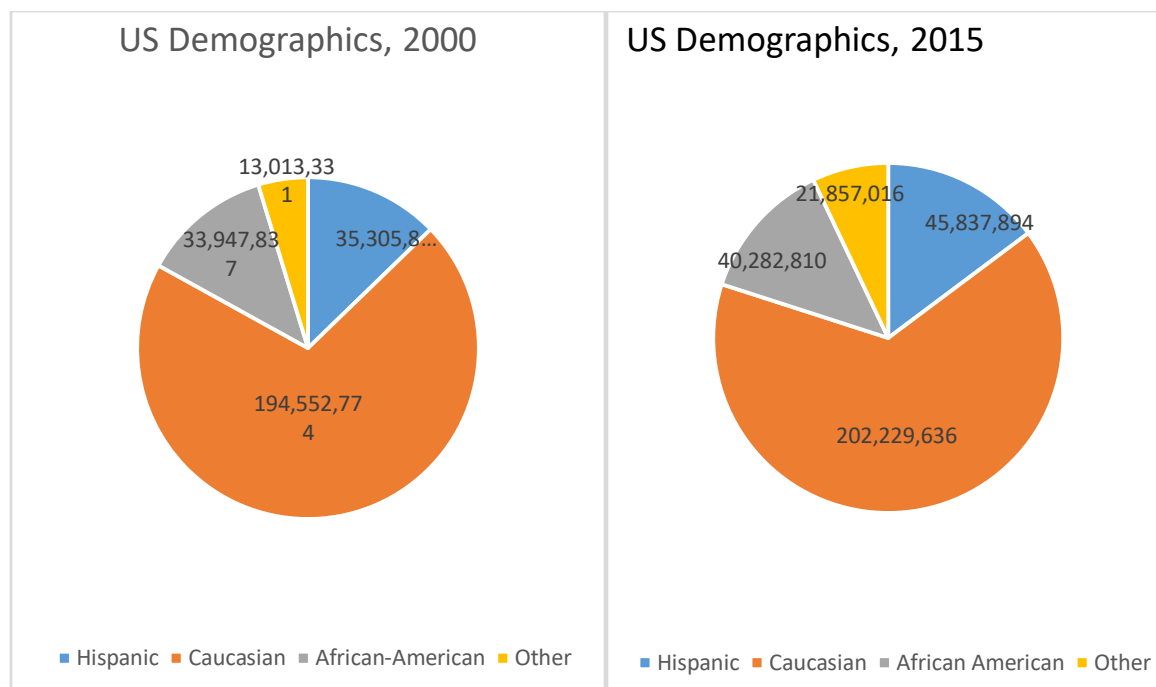
This study of the English Learner (EL) education program in Sampson County Schools attempted to evaluate the effectiveness of the current system for educating these students. This program was developed with the intent of improving the speaking, reading and writing skills of students with limited English proficiency. Potential improvements for decreasing the achievement gap for these students were developed during and after the completion of the study. This chapter provides a history of the demographic shift in Sampson County, the achievement gap, the purpose of the study, the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, and the key questions associated with the study.

### **History of the Demographic Shift in Sampson County**

The national, state, and county growth in the Hispanic population led to an increase in the number of children to be educated in the public schools across the United States. A great deal of time has been spent in the national media spotlighting this change and its implications for the nation as a whole.

According to the U.S. Census (2015), there has been a national demographic shift occurring in the United States. From 2000 to 2015, there was a tremendous increase in the Hispanic population in the country. In 2000, according to the U.S. Census, there were 35,305,818 Hispanic individuals in this country making up 12.5% of the population. According to data compiled in 2015, that number had been estimated to have reached 45,837,894, or nearly 15% of the population (see Figure 1) (U.S. Census, 2015).

As is the case in many rural counties in North Carolina, there had been a growing demographic shift occurring in Sampson County as well. According to the 2015 U.S. Census Bureau, the Hispanic population had nearly doubled over the previous 15 years, rising from



*Note.* (U.S. Census, 2000, 2015).

*Figure 1.* U.S. demographics 2000, 2015.

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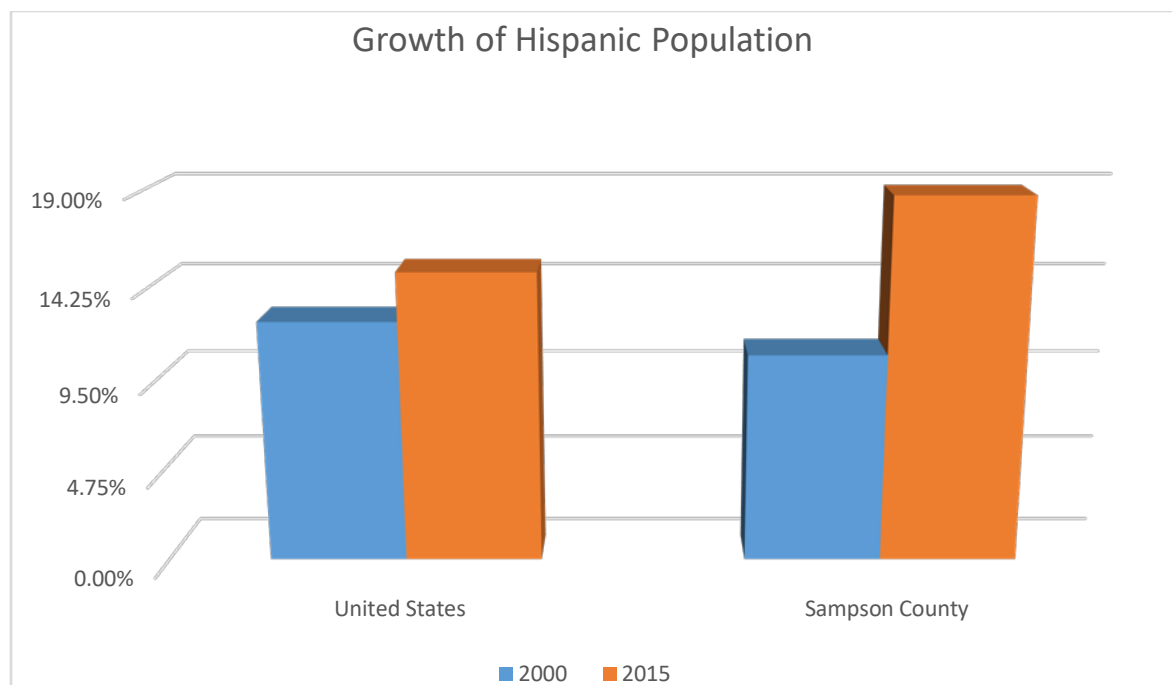
10.8% in 2000 to 18.8% as of July 15, 2015. This shift could be attributed to the impact agriculture has had on the economy of Sampson County (see Figure 2).

Sampson County is located in southeastern North Carolina. The county seat is in Clinton, a city of 8,787, according to Onboard Informatics, as of 2018. Approximately 33.6 miles west of the county seat is the city of Fayetteville, NC. The capital of North Carolina, Raleigh, is 59.2 miles northwest of Clinton (Onboard Informatics, 2018).

Sampson County is dominated by rural farmland. As of 2012, there were 1,067 individual farms in the county, covering 291,635 acres, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (2012). This county has historically been the second leading producer of hogs, third in the production of poultry, and the fourth leading producer of tobacco nation-wide. By total amounts across the United States, Sampson County led the nation in numbers of both turkey and hog production in 2012 (U.S. Department of Agriculture). Each of these facts has led to migrant families moving in increasing numbers to this rural county in southeastern North Carolina seeking employment opportunities.

The increased numbers of farm-related migrant families have placed an increased challenge for the local school system. The state of North Carolina determined the amount of money each system received in accordance with the number of students who attended the schools in the district based on the State Initial Allotment Formula (NC Division of School Business Services, 2016). These numbers lagged behind other counties in the state and surrounding area, including Johnston, Cumberland, and Wake counties because Sampson County was rural in nature. These monetary allotments were not based on the needs of the students being served, only the raw numbers; for example, one third grade teacher was allotted to a school system for every 17 students in Average Daily Membership (ADM) (NC Division of School Business





*Note.* (U.S. Census, 2015).

*Figure 2.* Growth of Hispanic population.

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Services, 2016). Most of the land in Sampson County was not developed, meaning individuals had not built structures on the land to increase the property tax value of the land they owned. The state also provided an allotment of \$88.93 per ADM for At-Risk Students based on the number of children living below the poverty line within the district (NC Division of School Business Services, 2016). These dollars failed to cover the cost of needed services incurred by the county. This gap was mainly due to the expansiveness of the county, separation of students into two school systems (Clinton City Schools and Sampson County Schools), and a limited tax base. This situation left a low property tax wealth county like Sampson with a tremendous undertaking as it pertains to producing the education dollars needed for students.

### **Need for the Study and the Achievement Gap**

Hispanic students brought with them differences which had to be addressed by the schools. Many of these families spoke Spanish as their only language in the home. Many of the children of these families entered the United States and Sampson County without the necessary skills to interact and learn in the traditional classroom, including study skills and basic language requirements. At the same time, the state of North Carolina and federal government had not provided the funding to assist Sampson County Schools with the resources necessary to help these children succeed.

This environment led to a need for changes in the ways students were taught to help Hispanic students perform as well on state tests as their Caucasian peers. As of the 2018-2019 school year, this change had not been happening. Caucasian students were performing better on these tests than all other ethnic groups, especially Hispanics (Great Schools, 2018).

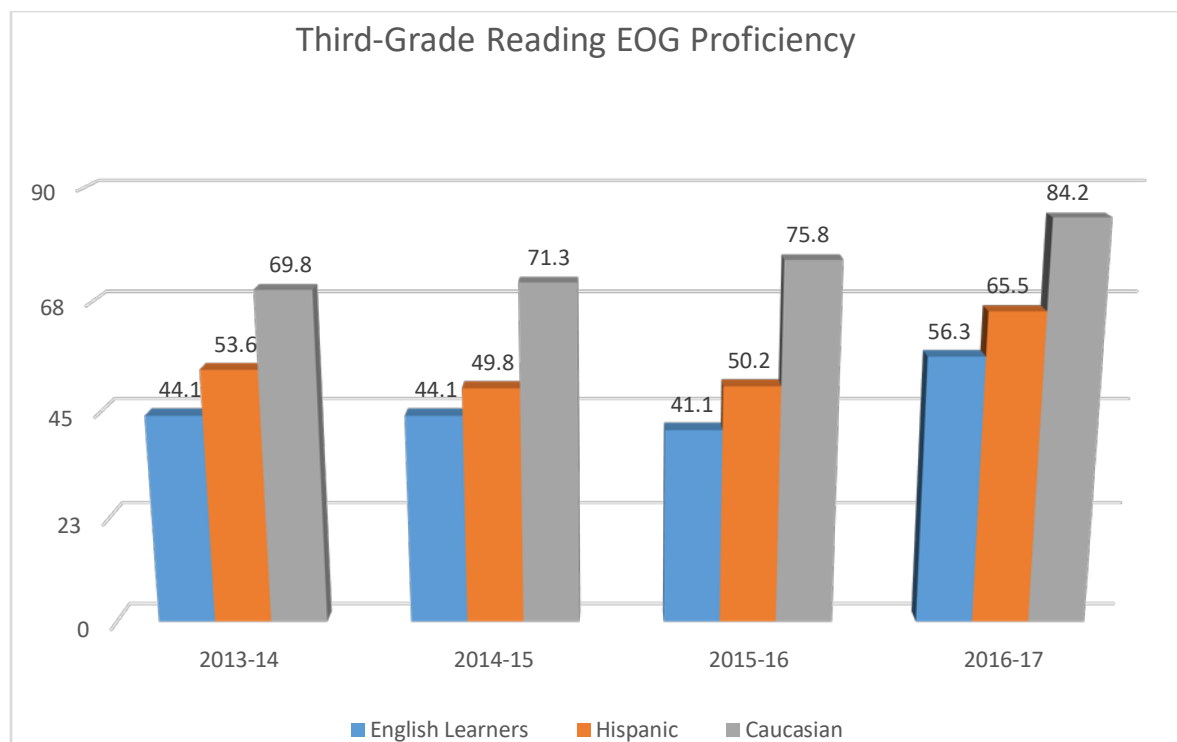
EOG tests had been administered to all students in North Carolina starting in third grade, and until the completion of the students' eighth-grade year of schooling. These tests tended to be

predominately multiple choice in nature and were given to a minimum of 95% of all students in every state-operated school in the areas of math and reading in these grade levels. In fifth and eighth-grade, students have also been expected to take an EOG in science as well. Individual student scores have been compared to a baseline of performance among students who took the exams at least two years earlier. This earlier testing provided cut-off rates for each student. Current students taking the exam were measured against these rates. The tests had been scored in five levels; students required a level III, IV, or V to be considered proficient in an area (Great Schools, 2018).

### **Third-Grade Reading EOG Proficiency**

In 2013-14, only 44.1% of EL students and 53.6% of Hispanic students were successful on the third-grade reading EOG; whereas 69.8% of Caucasian students showed proficiency (NC Department of Public Instruction, 2014). For the following school year (2014-15), the rate of Hispanic student proficiency declined to 49.8%, whereas EL success rates remained the same and 71.3% of Caucasian students met these requirements. In the 2015-16 school year, 75.8% of White students were successful. The success rate for Hispanic students was 50.2% and the EL proficiency rate fell to 41.1%. There was marked improvement among all students in the 2016-17 school year, with 84.2% of Caucasian students, 65.5% of Hispanic students, and 56.3% of EL students achieving proficiency. Even with this improvement, Hispanic proficiency rates were nearly 20 percentage points, and ELs nearly 30 points (see Figure 3), behind the dominant culture in the county (SAS Institute, 2016).

The achievement gap was even more visible among students in later grades who completed EOGs in reading. Each of the following charts is indicative of the achievement among students in fourth through eighth-grade.



*Note.* (NC Department of Public Instruction, 2013-2015; SAS Institute, 2016; Wesley Johnson, personal communication, July 6, 2017).

*Figure 3.* Third grade Reading EOG proficiency.

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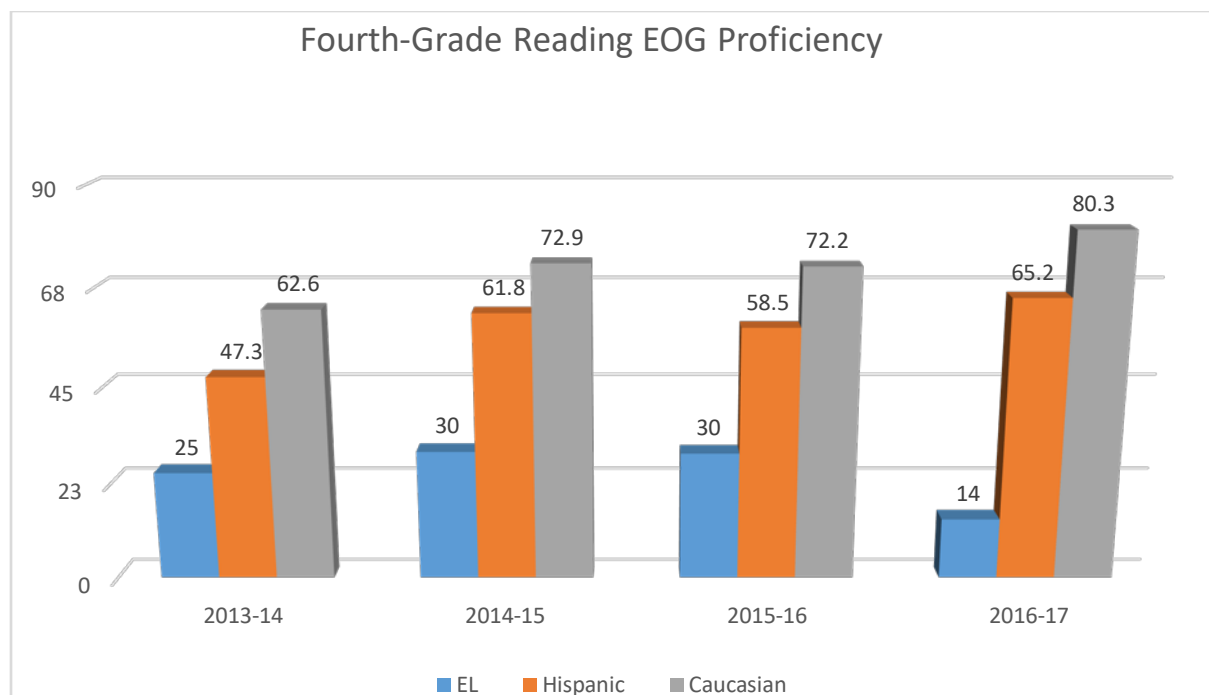
### **Fourth-Grade Reading EOG Proficiency**

The drop in proficiency level was highly evident between third and fourth-grade for EL students. Whereas Sampson County ELs achieved proficiency with a 46.4% average over the four-year period in third-grade, ELs in fourth-grade averaged only 22.0% proficiency. These data indicated a 24.4% difference between the two grade levels. When comparing multiple years of data, EL students performed far more poorly on their fourth-grade EOG than they did in the previous year. The change was not as apparent between the other two subgroups, with Hispanic students achieving proficiency at an average 54.8% rate in third-grade, and a 58.2% rate in fourth-grade. The dominant culture has outperformed both subgroups by 40 percentage points in third-grade and nearly 14 percentage points at the fourth-grade level.

The data indicated another piece of information: Sampson County proficiency rates among EL students have been reduced by more than half between the 2015-16 and 2016-17 school years. Based on cohort data trends, EL students who completed the third-grade reading EOG in 2015-16 scored over 27% lower on the fourth-grade reading EOG at the end of the 2016-17 school year (see Figure 4) (NC Department of Public Instruction, 2013-2015; SAS Institute, 2016; Wesley Johnson, personal communication, August 15, 2017).

### **Fifth-Grade English Reading EOG Proficiency**

The negative trend between EL students, Hispanic students, and their Caucasian counterparts continued into their fifth-grade year. Yet again, minus the outlier year of 2014-15, EL students achieved proficiency at a rate between 30% and 45% lower than the overall Hispanic population. This limited proficiency was even more dramatic when compared to Caucasian students, who consistently improved from 65.8% during the 2014-15 school year to 78.7% at the conclusion of the 2016-17 academic year. The data showed traditional Hispanic



*Note.* (NC Department of Public Instruction, 2013-2015; SAS Institute, 2016; Wesley Johnson, personal communication, August 15, 2017).

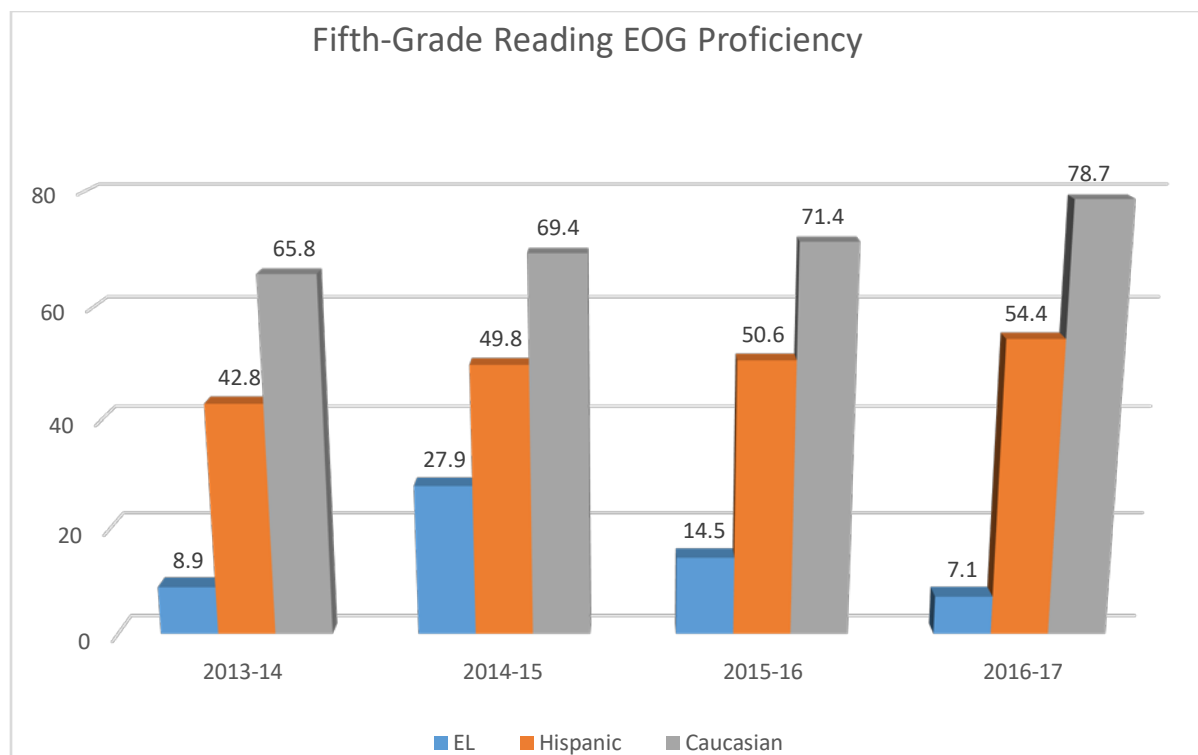
*Figure 4.* Fourth grade Reading EOG proficiency.

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students also indicated a steady rise in proficiency rate over the same time frame on this state-mandated examination. EL students, after making a large increase in proficiency from the 2013-14 year to the 2014-15 school year, moving from 8.9% to 27.9%, indicated a decline since 2013 (NC Department of Public Instruction, 2013-2015). The EL proficiency rate was cut more than in half during the 2015-16 school year over the 2014-15 school year, from 27.9% to 14.5% (SAS Institute, 2016). This rate was then cut in more than half again from the 2015-16 year to the 2016-17 year (see Figure 5) (Wesley Johnson, personal communication, August 15, 2017).

### **Sixth-Grade Reading EOG Proficiency**

Sixth-grade proficiency levels indicated consistent yearly gains among Hispanic students who completed the reading EOG over the four school years between 2013 and 2017 (NC Department of Public Instruction, 2013-2015; SAS Institute, 2016; Wesley Johnson, personal communication, August 15, 2017). These gains showed cohort growth between fifth-grade and sixth-grade students, but these gains did not match those of EL students. Yet again, EL students averaged under 17% in proficiency over the four years studied. Over the same time period, Hispanic students achieved proficiency at an average of 52%, and Caucasian students scored at 67% on average. The 15% achievement gap between Hispanic and Caucasian students indicated there was room for positive growth in this area, but the 35 point gap between ELs and Hispanic students, along with the 50% difference between ELs and Caucasian students, was an issue worth studying. The problem appeared to be growing, as EL students achieved at a 19.1% rate during the 2015-16 school year, yet performed more poorly during the 2016-17 school year (18.6%) (see Figure 6) (NC Department of Public Instruction, 2013-2015; SAS Institute, 2016; Wesley Johnson, personal communication, August 15, 2017). Targeted interventions at this grade level may have been necessary to increase growth among these students.

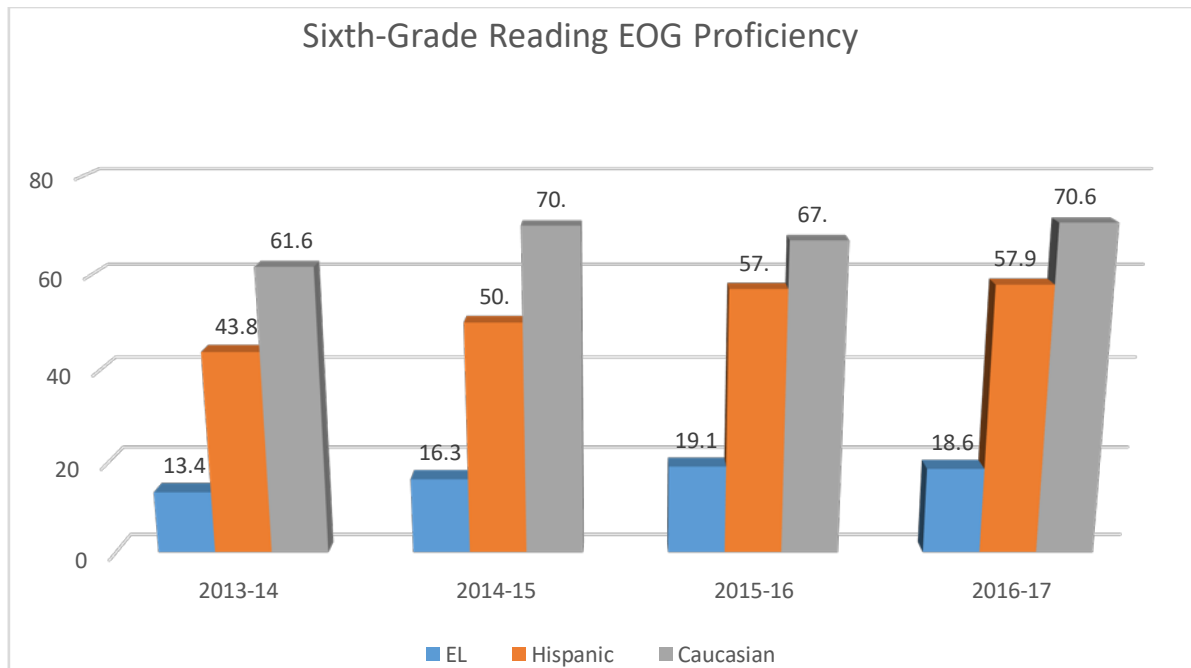


*Note.* (NC Department of Public Instruction, 2013-2015; SAS Institute, 2016; Wesley Johnson, personal communication, August 15, 2017).

*Figure 5.* Fifth grade Reading EOG proficiency.

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*Note.* (NC Department of Public Instruction, 2013-2015; SAS Institute, 2016; Wesley Johnson, personal communication, August 15, 2017).

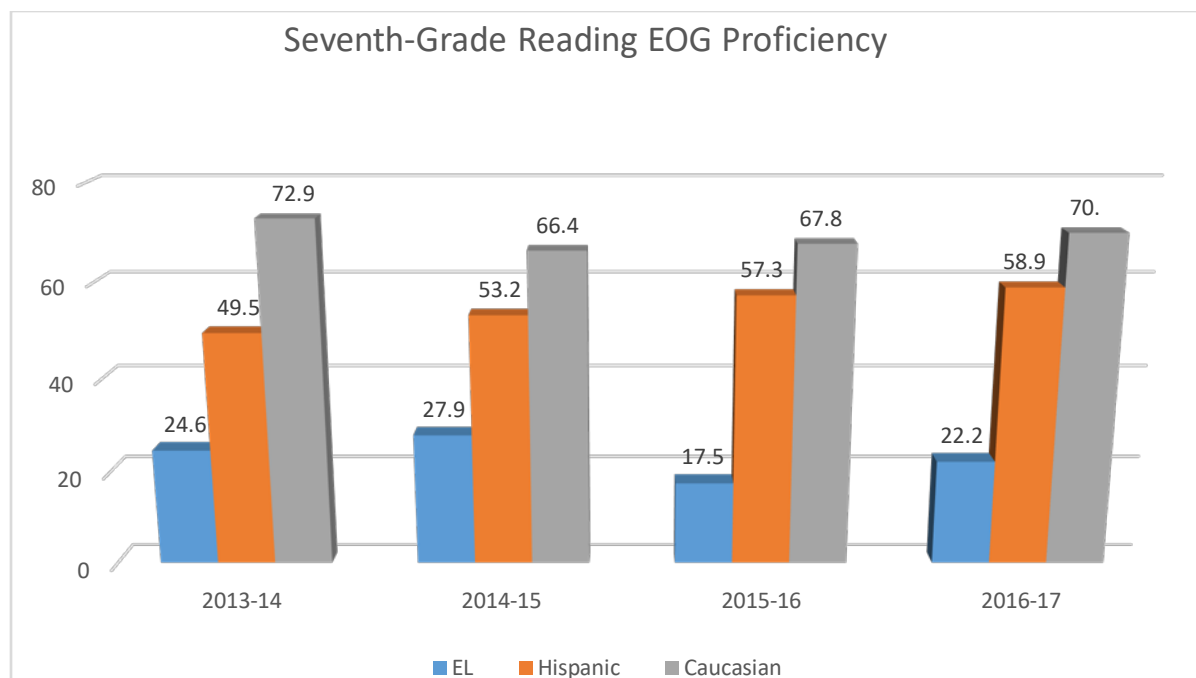
*Figure 6.* Sixth grade Reading EOG proficiency.

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### **Seventh-Grade Reading EOG Proficiency**

Patterns in seventh-grade rates of proficiency were more difficult to interpret. Both Caucasian rates and those among EL students have ebbed and flowed over the course of the four years of data studied. When Caucasian rates showed decline, between the 2013-14 and 2014-15 school years, where proficiency rates dropped from 72.9% to 66.4%, EL rates increased from 24.6% to 27.9% (NC Department of Public Instruction, 2013-2015). After this year, Caucasian rates resumed a pattern of steady growth. This growth pattern was not the case among EL students. This subgroup achieved more poorly between the 2014-15 and 2015-16 school years, where rates dropped nearly in half from 27.9% proficiency to 17.9% proficiency (SAS Institute, 2016). Hispanic rates increased in each of the four years, though the growth during the 2016-17 school year indicated a possible leveling off trend (Wesley Johnson, personal communication, August 15, 2017).

The drop in proficiency among EL students in seventh-grade matched the drop during the same school year among sixth-grade students in the same subgroup. This may have indicated a change in how sixth and seventh-grade students were assessed during that specific school year. As a cohort, these EL students should have shown approximately three points of growth between sixth and seventh-grade if there was not a change in assessment. The gap between Caucasian and EL students averaged over 46 percentage points over the four years studied (see Figure 7) (NC Department of Public Instruction, 2013-2015; SAS Institute, 2016; Wesley Johnson, personal communication, August 15, 2017).



*Note.* (NC Department of Public Instruction, 2013-2015; SAS Institute, 2016; Wesley Johnson, personal communication, August 15, 2017).

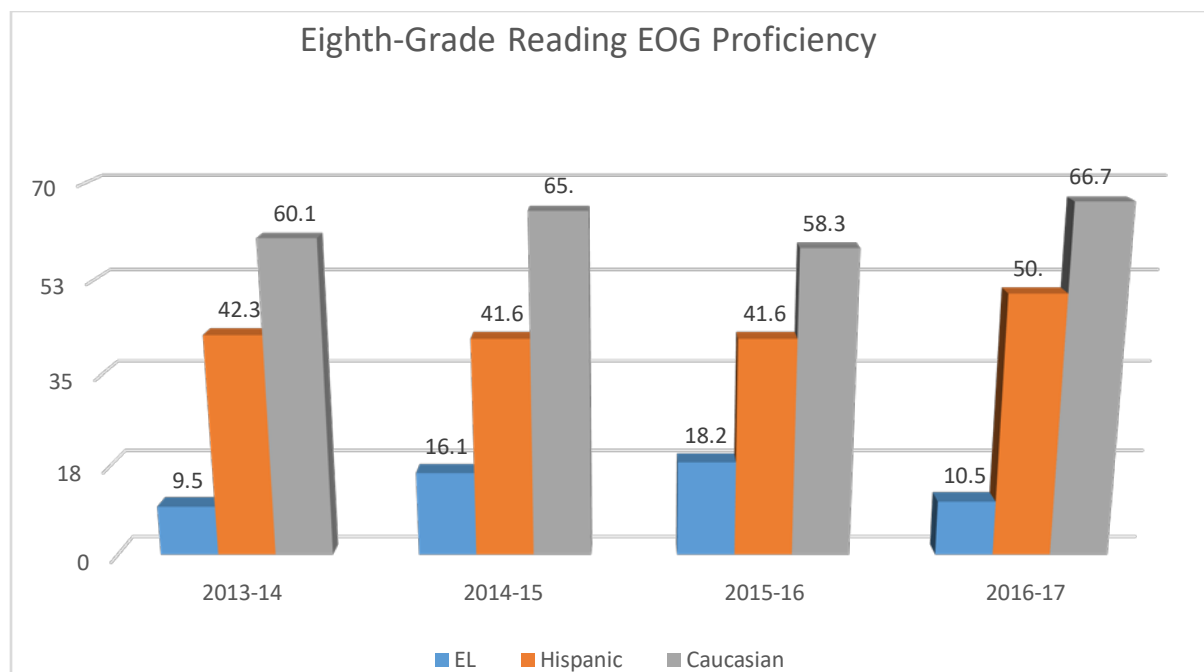
*Figure 7. Seventh grade Reading EOG proficiency.*

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### **Eighth-Grade Reading EOG Proficiency**

Eighth-grade proficiency rates indicated students performed less effectively on these tests than those in previous years. All scores among students at this grade level showed a drop with these students (excluding EL students during the 2015-16 school year), both by cohort, and by grade to grade comparison. Hispanic proficiency rates dropped between seven and twelve points each year between seventh and eighth-grade. EL students consistently scored between 40 and 56 points lower than their Caucasian counterparts, as well as 21 and 40 points below the overall Hispanic rates over the course of this study (NC Department of Public Instruction, 2013-2015; SAS Institute, 2016; Wesley Johnson, personal communication, August 15, 2017).

Among each subgroup of students, proficiency rates grew and dropped. Caucasian students scored just over 60% proficient in 2013-14 65% the following year, then this group's scores fell by nearly seven percentage points during the 2015-16 school year (NC Department of Public Instruction, 2013-2015; SAS Institute, 2016). These scores rebounded in 2016-17 to 66.7% proficiency (Wesley Johnson, personal communication, August 15, 2017). Hispanic rates dropped from 42.3% to 41.6% between the 2013-14 and 2014-15 school years (NC Department of Public Instruction, 2013-2015). Hispanic students achieved at the same rate the following school year and increased over eight points between the 2015-16 and 2016-17 school years (SAS Institute, 2016; Wesley Johnson, personal communication, August 15, 2017). EL student proficiency rates lagged behind, falling over the first three years from 9.5% to 18.2%, but fell nearly eight points to 10.5% during the 2016-17 school year (see Figure 8) (Wesley Johnson, personal communication, August 15, 2017).



*Note.* (NC Department of Public Instruction, 2013-2015; SAS Institute, 2016; Wesley Johnson, personal communication, August 15, 2017).

*Figure 8.* Eighth grade Reading EOG proficiency.

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## **Problem Statement**

The above data indicated a gap in the performance between these two groups of students on the EOG tests for reading; this gap increased each of the last four years. Based on demographic numbers which showed more Hispanics were moving to Sampson County, it seemed appropriate that improvement be made in the education of the children from these families in order to improve the performance of the county schools as a whole. It could have been argued that spending time focusing on Hispanic students was not the best use of limited resources due to the migrant nature of many of these families. This argument would have been in disagreement with the North Carolina State Supreme Court ruling which stated that all children in North Carolina deserve a “sound, basic education” (*Hoke County Board of Education et al. v. State of North Carolina*, 1997, p. 3). In order for the schools of Sampson County to meet this requirement, all students had to be served, including migrants (Hudson, 2017).

In order to make the North Carolina Constitution a reality for Hispanic students, there were several questions which had to be asked. First, what was leading to this achievement gap between White and Hispanic students? Next, what programs could be put in place to increase the achievement of Hispanic students? The third question was what other programs would had to lose funding in order to improve the scores of the Hispanic student population?

## **Purpose of the Study**

The above described demographic shift created concern among educational leaders in Sampson County Schools. Focusing energy on properly serving these populations became a priority, especially as the demographics of this rural county shifted from predominately Caucasian to a community with an ever-increasing Hispanic population. As the Hispanic

population grew, the county did not modify the educational program to compensate for this shift, thereby possibly limiting gains for these student subgroups.

There was an indicated achievement gap between these incoming Hispanic students and their Caucasian counterparts. In order for the school system to be successful, these students required educational services which could eliminate this gap. Without intervention, this achievement gap seemed likely to widen as the demographics continued to change. Due to changes made in the state accountability model used in the state, decreasing this achievement gap was of further importance.

It was the intent of this study to evaluate the county's procedures, policies and methods for promoting student learning among K-8 members of this population. In order to accomplish this goal, the achievement gap had to be analyzed to locate the pitfalls in the educational program for these students. This study attempted to supply a series of recommendations for educational program improvements which could be utilized across the county school system leading to increased positive outcomes for Hispanic students from grades 3-8 countywide. The goal of this study was to identify potential interventions which would lessen the gap between Hispanic and White students in Sampson County, North Carolina.

### **Key Questions**

*Could an EL model of instruction be developed which was tailored to the demographic/instructional needs of students in one sub-district within the Sampson County Schools LEA as opposed to the one size fits all approach which was being utilized?*

As a district, it was required that all students are provided with a sound, basic education. This standard applied to all sub-groups in the county. The county traditionally focused on

increasing the achievement of African-American students, but with the influx of Hispanic families into the community, this mindset needed changed.

All students, after spending one year in American schools, have been required to participate and succeed on all state level exams, including those focused on reading in English. In order for these students to be successful, English acquisition needed to be increased. In order to achieve the necessary gains, new methods of providing the required English skills were necessary. Developing a program of instruction which matched the skills of educators with the needs of students in individual schools could have been an effective means of overcoming the achievement gap.

*How could the district make the necessary gains among Hispanic populations without negatively impacting other academic programs across the district?*

A portion of this study was focused on funding sources for improvements to the EL education program. Sampson County has been a low-wealth district. Every dollar available to the district had to be utilized carefully to ensure all students received the best education possible. Many of the program options which might have been implemented were costly, which created the potential to negatively impact the funding of other necessary educational programs supplied to students by the county.

### **Summary**

There has been a gap in performance rates on state-level examinations between EL, Hispanic, and Caucasian students in Sampson County. This gap was the most noticeable and concerning among EL students. After third grade, ELs struggled to perform above 20% proficiency on average on a state required reading exams. These students also performed far below both Hispanic and Caucasian students on these exams (NC Department of Public



Instruction, 2013-2015; SAS Institute, 2016; Wesley Johnson, personal communication, August 15, 2017).

This significant gap between student subgroups provided an opportunity to evaluate, and possibly enhance the EL program in Sampson County. The ever changing demographics in the county, and therefore increased number of Spanish speaking immigrants, indicated a population which required additional focus in order for students to perform more successfully on these exams.

## **CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

### **Introduction**

This chapter was developed and presented in such a way as to provide research based information further showing the need for change in Sampson County Schools. The first two sub-sections cover requirements placed on schools for the improvement of EL instruction based on changes in federal law and state requirements from the North Carolina State Board of Education. The chapter then shifts to the varieties of EL programs used across the country to educate the target population. This approach was provided as guidance for the development of a comprehensive plan of EL instruction utilizing the most effective methods provided in each of these programs. A sub-section covering the current countywide program for EL instruction follows the descriptions of programs utilized in other parts of the United States. The final portion of this chapter focuses on literature concerning Professional Learning Communities, as this type of collaborative effort was utilized to develop a comprehensive instructional plan for EL instruction in individual schools in Sampson County.

### **Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965**

The latest incarnation of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, commonly referred to as the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2017 (ESSA), mandated certain changes to the educational programs across the country concerning EL students. Under this law, the federal government allocated over \$750 Billion for fiscal year 2017 (October 1, 2017 – September 30, 2018), nearly \$770 Billion for fiscal year 2018, approximately \$785 Billion for fiscal year 2019, and almost \$885 Billion for fiscal year 2020. The federal government provided expectations to ensure this money was spent in an appropriate manner, meaning it should have

been utilized to improve the educational opportunities of this particular population (U.S. Department of Education, 2017).

Title III of this Act, the English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement Act, was developed and enacted by Congress to assist ELs in achieving higher rates of success in English educational programs. The goal of the federal government was to eliminate the achievement gap between immigrant children and English speaking students by providing adequate funding through sub-grants to develop, establish, and provide effective English language acquisition programs for these students (U.S. Department of Education, 2017).

Section 8302 of the ESSA placed the burden of creating and submitting a standardized plan by each state's Secretary of Education to the U.S. Department of Education which provided details of how monies allocated would be spent and how these expenditures would impact the subgroups described in the Act (U.S. Department of Education, 2017). Section 1111 provided that these plans had to be submitted either by April 3, 2017 or September 18, 2017 (NC Department of Public Instruction, 2017).

### **NC Consolidated State Plan**

On September 18, 2017, the North Carolina Secretary of Education submitted a consolidated plan for the education of at-risk students to the U.S. Department of Education as the means for applying for the federal sub-grant money provided in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965 (NC Department of Public Instruction, 2017). The portions of this plan impacting ELs and English acquisition were presented by PowerPoint to Local Education Agency (LEA) accountability leaders on September 19, 2017 (Howard, Sonneman, & Molique, 2017).

According to Howard et al. (2017), the North Carolina plan provided a new model of accountability for schools across the state. At the elementary and middle school levels, proficiency scores would be developed for use by grades 3-8 ELA/Reading EOGs, grades 3-8 Math EOGs, Math I EOCs, grades 5 and 8 Science EOGs, and EL progress. Growth would be determined using EOG scores on ELA/Reading, Math and Science exams. This model made improving EL performance a priority for every school and district across the state.

This plan provided a structure for demonstrating the state was making the appropriate yearly gains required to ensure the continuation of federal funding, while decreasing the achievement gap between Hispanic and EL students and their English speaking counterparts, according to Howard et al. (2017). Each school in the state was going to receive a letter grade for each of these sub-groups yearly starting with the 2017-18 school year. In order to achieve the level of a sub-group, each school would have to have 30 students who fit in this category. Every student in North Carolina, no matter what status they started attending schools in the state, was expected to complete all state-mandated exams in order to provide an adequate baseline about subgroup performance. In the past, students attending American schools for the first time, who had a language barrier, were exempted from the state mandated ELA tests during their first school year of attendance in a North Carolina public school. In order to balance the data out, and ensure students newly attending North Carolina schools did not negatively impact school overall scoring, the first year these students tested, their scores did not count against growth or proficiency in the accountability system. During their second year, this testing would only count for growth. After these two years assessment data would be counted in all areas, just as it has been for traditional students (Howard et al., 2017).

In order to provide the maximum benefit to schools, once a student had achieved exit status on the WIDA ACCESS test, a yearly examination for students K-12 grade which is used to determine the English abilities of EL students, these students' scores would be counted in the school's accountability model as members of the EL sub-group (Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System, 2014; Howard et al., 2017). Limits in the amount of time a student could remain in an EL program and count positively towards proficiency growth were also instituted. The maximum amount of time a student could remain in an EL program and count in this manner became five years. School level EL programs were expected to achieve certain levels of student performance on the WIDA ACCESS test yearly to ensure proper exit times were met. NCDPI utilized the following formula to determine if students were making adequate progress towards exiting the EL program: "Progress = IS + {(4.8 – IS)/Y} \* N" (NC State Board of Education, 2018, p. 37). The acronyms in the formula were defined as: IS, a student's initial ACCESS composite score; Y, the number of years expected for a student to achieve the state mandated exit score of 4.8 overall; and N, the number of years a student is in an EL program. The 'N' was determined based on the student's initial performance on the ACCESS test, where the higher initial achievement score reached by the student, the fewer years allotted for program exit (NC State Board of Education, 2018).

These test scores were to be used to determine whether EL progress was being met by the individual school. Each school was being provided its current data (from school year 2016-17) based on these standards as a baseline to show what growth was required to eliminate disparity between subgroups and the dominant culture within 10 years from the beginning of the program (school year 2017-18) (Howard et al., 2017).

## **Varieties of EL Programs**

There have been several varieties of instructional programs offered to assist English Learners in achieving academic success in American schools. Of these, there were four specific programs utilized in some form across the country. These four programs were Structured English Immersion, Transitional Bilingual, Developmental Bilingual, and Dual Immersion (Valentino & Reardon, 2015). Sampson County has used a modified version of English immersion to provide language instruction for ELs. Each of these styles had benefits and drawbacks.

### **Structured English Immersion**

Multiple states, including California, Arizona, and Massachusetts, have been utilizing a Structured English Immersion (SEI) program for the teaching of ELs in the public schools (Adams & Jones, 2006; Baker, 1998; Krashen, 1999; Rios-Aguilar, Gonzalez Canche, & Moll, 2012). This program was designed to maximize English instruction to ELs to incorporate these students into the mainstream educational content programs as quickly as possible. These programs were designed to allow for the implementation of a nearly all English core curriculum of instruction while providing ELs the focused intervention needed to acquire English skills in the shortest amount of time possible, thereby limiting the negative long-term impact of other English acquisition programs on the curriculum requirements developed by the state for all students (Baker, 1998).

The program mandated by law based on Proposition 203 in Arizona should be particularly noted (Lillie, Markos, Arias, & Wiley, 2012). This program was instituted in 2008 with a specific set of requirements. In the SEI program, EL students were required to be placed in a four-hour block of instruction focused on English language acquisition. Students were removed from traditional instruction for this period of time in order to receive focused English

instruction where the four hours was broken up into specific curriculum areas. One hour per day in this classroom was spent in each of the following areas: reading, writing, conversational English and vocabulary, and finally grammar (Lillie et al., 2012). This four-hour daily block was intended to last for one academic school year, thereby enhancing student English skills at a rapid rate in order to allow for mainstream education as soon as possible (Lillie et al., 2012; Rios-Aguilar et al., 2012).

There were several benefits to this program. Students were provided adequate time for English language acquisition over this transitional year during the required four-hour block (Rios-Aguilar et al., 2012). The implementation of this program led to an increase of bilingual Latino students in the state of Arizona (Lillie, 2016). Immersion techniques allowed students to make connections between the Spanish already attained to English concepts required for learning content related information (Gersten & Woodward, 1985). According to Gomez and Jimenez-Silva (2011), with minor modifications in teaching strategies (especially in the science curriculum), this program also allowed core teachers to focus on content in English while EL students were provided instruction in academic vocabulary and language in the four-hour block mandated by the state.

The negative implications of these programs were dramatic. Americans have been intolerant of languages other than English being spoken and utilized in this country (Adams & Jones, 2006). Research on this model of EL education has been deemed as inadequate when compared to other models for bilingual language acquisition (Adams & Jones, 2006; Rolstad, Mahoney, & Glass, 2005). The loss of a student's ability to utilize their dominant language has been detrimental to their future success in their educational experiences (Adams & Jones, 2006; Lillie, 2016). The implementation of this style of program has caused issues with core content

instruction as well. In Arizona, elementary-aged ELs were placed in SEI classrooms for four hours per day for an entire school year. The state mandated each elementary student complete physical education and music requirements, as well. When these blocks of time, along with lunch, were placed into a traditional school schedule, very little time was left during the school day for core content (Lillie et al., 2012). The state decided these programs should only last for one school year, but research indicated this was not what was actually occurring. Students were spending multiple years in this program, according to Lillie (2016), thereby compounding the issue of loss of content instruction for ELs. This approach further compounded the loss of core instruction occurring for these students (Lillie, 2016).

There was research which indicated teachers were not prepared to provide core content instruction of equal value for both EL students and traditional English speakers in the same classroom. This created instances where visible differences in student work was produced and displayed between traditional students and ELs which were indicative of the core content instruction issue with SEI. Without the addition of after-school programs, peer-tutoring, traditional tutoring and/or summer school options, students may not have adequately improved educationally (Lillie et al., 2012).

### **Transitional Bilingual**

Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) programs have focused on an allowance of students to ease into use of the dominant tongue over a longer period of time in the early grades than an immersion-style program source. Teachers utilized a mix of English and Spanish in these classrooms in order to increase the achievement levels of the EL students. The ultimate goal was to transfer the students from the use of English as the dominant tongue over Spanish without negatively impacting the cultural well-being of the child (Fishman, 1970).



Students were immersed in their own language in Kindergarten, with a slow decline of Spanish instruction occurring in grades one and two. By the time students reached third-grade, districts utilizing TBE programs expected teachers to spend 50% of instructional time focusing on English, and 50% on Spanish. As with many bilingual programs, a majority of the instruction provided students in these programs was conducted in English. Teachers tended to drop the levels of Spanish presented in the classroom while maintaining the same levels of English instruction (Irby, Tong, Lara-Alecio, Meyer, & Rodriguez, 2007).

The largest benefit of these types of programs was indicated by test scores in the second-grade. Students in TBE programs outperformed students involved in regular EL programs. This was attributed to the students' enhancements in the use of their dominant language which influenced their ability to acquire the English language (Kim, Hutchison, & Winsler, 2015). Research indicated the growth attributed to second-grade students could have been further enhanced with the implementation of a TBE program in Head Start programs (Duran, Roseth, & Hoffman, 2013).

There were several negative implications for the use of these programs in schools. The first, and possibly most important, was the drop off in performance on high-stakes tests by students the further removed they became from third-grade and the end of the TBE program. The programs did not enhance achievement scores over time, excluding small increases in reading capacity. Increases in achievement scores tended to level off after second-grade for students involved in TBE (Gersten & Woodward, 1995). Research by Slavin, Madden, Calderon, Chamberlain, and Henessey noted a drop in achievement levels among TBE students as early as fourth-grade (2011). According to Reese, Gallimore, and Guthrie (2005), the drop in achievement levels among TBE students became even more evident by the time the students

were in high school. By the time students in their sample reached the end of eighth-grade, nearly one third were performing “one or more standard deviations below national norms in reading in English” by this point in their educational career (Reese et al., 2005, p. 693).

Another drawback with TBE programs was that they were not implemented with fidelity. By utilizing instructors whose dominant language was English, the tendency was for these individuals to teach in English, as opposed to maintaining the prescribed program of instruction; i.e., failing to maintain the 50-50 split required in the third-grade in these programs. Research indicated there was a predisposition among administrators to see Spanish instruction as a method of remediation, as opposed to a way to build fluency which led to pressure being placed on teachers to instruct in English, thereby decreasing the fidelity of the overall program (Bruce, Lara-Alecio, Parker, Hansbrouk, Weaver, & Irby, 1997).

### **Developmental Bilingual**

Developmental Bilingual Education (DBE) programs have been considered one-way bilingual programs. As opposed to Dual Immersion, these programs involved only students of one language, those speaking Spanish or another language. These programs transitioned to full English slower than Transitional Bilingual Education programs, with students still receiving 10% of their education in Spanish in the fifth-grade (Palmer, 2007; Tong, Irby, Lara-Alecio, & Mathes, 2008).

There were several benefits with this style of program. According to Tong et al. (2008), as long as the program was implemented with fidelity, English reading and speaking skills were enhanced through the use of DBE. These results were indicated in their study in the following areas: “phonemic awareness, letter-sound correspondence, word recognition and spelling, and spelling, fluency, and comprehension” (Tong et al., 2008, p. 525). According to the IRIS Center,

an education think tank at Vanderbilt University focused on improving learning and behavior among school aged children, other benefits included: students learned content in English and their original language; created an atmosphere for increased collaboration between families and teachers; and ELs maintained their identity and a link to their culture (The IRIS Center, 2016).

The major drawback of this form of bilingual education was these students underperformed in English Language Arts skills when compared with those who were enrolled in English Immersion programs in their early elementary school careers. Performance levels balanced out by second-grade, but these students fell behind their Dual Immersion counterparts by the time they reached middle school (Valentino & Reardon, 2015).

### **Dual Immersion**

Dual Immersion (DI) programs across the nation developed as research concerning how to engage non-English-speaking learners with traditional American education grew. In many areas, including those in North Carolina, students from Hispanic backgrounds were immersed in traditional classrooms for regular instruction, but removed for portions of the day to EL classrooms in order to build English language skills (Valdes, 1998; Valentino & Reardon, 2015). The mindset has changed over the past ten years.

These programs were intended to develop bilingualism in the schools by mixing EL students with traditional English-speaking students who learned in both Spanish and English. One of the major tenets of this style of education focused on providing “students the opportunity to learn with students who model high-quality language in the language they [were] not yet proficient in” (Valentino & Reardon, 2015, p. 615). DI programs provided an additional method for educating the increasing numbers of non-English-speaking students entering the public school system. These programs also enhanced the language skills of the native English-speaking

population, allowing them to interact effectively with a majority of individuals from Latin America. This also provided the opportunity for both cultures to grow together, thereby improving cross-culturalism in the United States (Christian, 1994).

Research indicated the benefits gained from DI programs surpassed those of other programs which focused on teaching English as opposed to creating bilingualism among both Hispanic students and traditional English speakers. In research conducted by Nicholas Block (2011a), the parents of EL students who were involved in DI programs were enthusiastic about the possibilities provided their children through the use of these programs. This perception among parents of Hispanic students was visible in English-speaking students who were involved in DI programs, according to further research by Block (2011). In this research, student performance in the reading of both languages was enhanced, as well as the ability and desire to speak in Spanish by English-speaking students. Surveys of English-speaking students involved in DI programs were found to be more accepting of diversity than those of their peers who were not involved in these programs (Block, 2011).

Alamillo, Yun, and Bennett (2017) argued DI presented a mindset that students should be treated as “language acquirers” as opposed to language learners. Elementary-aged students had the ability to acquire language skills, and thereby, had the ability to blend the two languages taught, which enhanced their educational experience (Alamillo et al., 2017).

Academic gains were the greatest benefit of DI programs. Research found that the English skills of both Spanish and English language speakers were enhanced by the use of a school level developed DI program known as Exito Bilingue (Cobb, Vega, & Kronauge, 2006; Smith & Arnot-Hopffer, 1998). The use of this program demonstrated that local level educators had the ability to develop an effective literacy program which matched the needs of their

students (Smith & Arnot-Hopffer, 1998). Research conducted at Monteverde School in California indicated academic growth could be maintained at a K-8 school which had implemented DI school wide. As of 2001, students had increasingly scored above the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile on the Stanford Achievement Test as they progressed through the program (Quintanar-Sarellana, 2004). According to Valentino and Reardon (2015), a properly instituted DI program created much higher ELA high stakes testing results by the time students reached seventh-grade among ELs. Students who were part of a DI program also had the added benefit of improved conversational and linguistic skills in the home setting (Murphy, 2014).

There were several limitations to the effectiveness of DI programs. The first was there was limited open support for these programs at the state level, and many times, at the district level. In order for these programs to succeed, support was a necessity. In order to promote fidelity, a program for implementation and monitoring had to be created at the district level to ensure success (Warhol & Mayer, 2012). Another limitation related to resources and other issues, including: migrant nature of the EL population, lack of resources, ability of teachers to conduct classes in multiple languages, and support from the administration (Smith & Arnot-Hopffer, 1998). A further issue with DI programs surfaced if the program was implemented simply as a way to improve the test scores of non-minority students. This created a possible issue where minority students were not the focus of the program, and therefore, the program had a higher tendency of failure, according to Valdes (1998).

### **Sampson County Model of EL Instruction**

Several schools in Sampson County utilized the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) method for teaching core content to ELs (Wesley Johnson, personal communication, December 4, 2017). This method of instruction had been repeatedly adapted by

EL educational experts for use with any of the above described programs for EL instruction. This protocol was intended to provide an appropriate framework for instruction which was targeted at providing the greatest impact on ELs in the traditional classroom. The further goal of the protocol was to provide ELs with help in learning academic vocabulary while the students were learning grade level curriculum. An eight-part guide for lesson production was provided to assist teachers in developing EL focused lesson plans consisting of: “preparation, building background, comprehensible input, strategies, interaction, practice and application, lesson delivery, and review and assessment” (Hanson & Filibert, 2008, p. 12).

Small group instruction was provided in EL classes by trained EL teachers who made regular contact with students requiring services. Student-service levels provided were determined by multiple criteria in three categories. Sampson County provided methods of service delivery for elementary, middle, and high school students, but as this program focused on elementary school students, this is the portion covered in the text (Sampson County Schools, 2016).

### **Intensive**

To meet this standard, a student had to meet three of the following five criteria: (1) spent three years or less time in American schools; (2) scored a 3.9 or lower on the ACCESS for ELLs examination which was conducted annually; (3) required assistance with coursework; (4) may not have meet proficiency standards on high stakes reading tests; and (5) an interruption in formal schooling (Sampson County Schools, 2016). According to county policy, these students were to be provided a pull-out time with an EL teacher to develop the skills necessary to succeed for at least two days per week and a minimum of 120 minutes per week. These students were also to be provided Imagine Learning protocol of 30 minutes four times per week (Wesley Johnson, personal communication, December 4, 2017; Sampson County Schools, 2016).

## **Supportive**

A student had to be identified as an EL and must have met at least two of the following five criteria to qualify for this level of support: (1) spent five years or fewer in U.S. schools; (2) scored a composite score of less than or equal to 4.8 on the ACCESS for ELLs test; (3) required assistance in their coursework; (4) may not meet the standards for proficiency on state-mandated high stakes tests; and (5) had an interruption in their formal education (Sampson County Schools, 2016). Students meeting the criteria received pull-out services by a certified EL teacher to focus on academic skills, which were identified through formative assessment and/or two days per week of time with a content teacher who had been trained in providing services for ELs for a minimum of 40 minutes per week. These students also received Imagine Learning protocol outside of the EL classroom at 30 minutes, four times per week (Sampson County Schools, 2016).

## **Transitional**

In order to receive services in this category, the student must have been labeled as EL and must have met one or more of the four following criteria: (1) attended U.S. schools for five or more years; (2) achieved a 4.8 or higher composite score on the ACCESS for ELLs test but scored less than a 4.0 on the reading or writing portions of the exam; (3) required assistance in completing classwork; and (4) may have been below required proficiency on state-mandated exams (Sampson County Schools, 2016). Students categorized in this manner were required to receive scaffolded content based on the academic/language needs of the student throughout the school day. These services were to be provided by either a content teacher who planned collaboratively with the EL teacher, content teachers trained in EL instructional strategies for the regular classroom, or EL staff members who were supervised by the EL teacher along with the

input of content area teachers. It was recommended these students also receive 30 minutes, four times per week of access to Imagine Learning protocol (Sampson County Schools, 2016).

### **Professional Learning Communities**

According to the American Institutes for Research (1997), a Professional Learning Community has been a powerful method for promoting school improvement, as well as instituting change, by bringing teachers and administrators together to focus on a particular action. These communities were first established through published research which indicated teachers who were provided support to improve their professional development were more successful than those who were not provided the same type of structure (Rosenholtz, 1989). This original research was further developed through the research of McLaughlin and Talbert (1993), whose findings indicated further enhancement in the teaching of educators when there was opportunity for these teachers to collaborate based on their knowledge of a subject area or pedagogical idea.

With this research in mind, Professional Learning Communities (PLC) were designed to bring educators together to develop and improve the educational experiences of students through collaborative learning (NC Department of Public Instruction, 2018a). The collaborative nature of these meetings allowed educators to focus energy on an issue or educational requirement among individuals who were enhancing their professional development as a group.

### **Summary**

The federal and state governments have provided requirements for Local Education Agencies (LEAs) and schools to effectively demonstrate Hispanic and EL students were being provided an effective English education. These guidelines made changes in the structure of EL programs in every LEA a requirement and a priority. There were several different programs



being utilized around the United States to assist ELs in achieving success in an English-based educational system. Each of these programs had its benefits and drawbacks. Parts of each, a specific program, or some totally new way of teaching these students needed to be instituted in order for the district to achieve success in this area. Based on student performance data on ELA/Reading EOGs, Sampson County's model for providing instruction to ELs required a program evaluation to ensure EL students were successful. In order to develop a truly inclusive model for EL educational improvement, the use of PLCs to create a collaborative environment for improving educational experiences was necessary and prudent.

## **CHAPTER 3: APPROACH TO THE PROBLEM OF PRACTICE**

### **Improvement Science**

Traditionally, experimental methods were utilized to improve educational systems, according to Lewis (2015). This type of research accepted the premise that specific changes made in one educational setting could be implemented in subsequent locations with the same results as long as the improvements were instituted with fidelity. Though this practice made sense with purely scientific studies, local education settings were complex, dynamic, individualized settings. Improvement science allowed for a process by which a program improvement could be implemented quickly and with monitoring and assessment, be strengthened and modified over time (Lewis, 2015).

Improvement science utilized cycles of testing and learning to focus energy on an improvement, implementing a change, studying the effectiveness of this modification and further enhancing the improvement after studying the original course taken. Langley, Moen, Nolan, Nolan, Norman, and Provost (2009) referred to this as the Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) Cycle of Improvement (p. 97). According to Lemire, Chritie, and Inkelas (2017), the first step in the process was to develop a specific objective and a plan for implementation of a change. The second step, was the implementation phase. The plan from step one was put into practice while data were collected when problems arose with the implementation. During the third step, the collected data was compiled and compared to the original hypothesis to determine if improvement had occurred. The fourth step allowed the opportunity to modify the original plan based on the findings and thereby started the process over again, if required (Lemire et al., 2017). This allowed for cycles of continuous improvement based on the localized needs of the organization.

This style of research lent itself well to educational settings. Professional Learning Communities could be developed with the goal of increasing EL performance utilizing the Plan-Do-Study-Act Cycle where principals, teachers and researchers could focus on this problem as a team, or sets of teams. These teams could then modify their solutions through cycles of implementation and further improvement (Sparks, 2013). Ultimately, the goal “was to involve teachers and principals in research ...and ensure new interventions would succeed when they’re taken to scale” (Sparks, 2013, p. 5).

### **Study Questions**

In order to properly assess the EL program in Sampson County and determine changes which could be implemented to improve students’ proficiency and growth scores, two study questions were addressed. These questions provided the framework for this study.

1. Could an EL model of instruction be developed which was tailored to the demographic/instructional needs of students in one sub-district within the Sampson County Schools LEA as opposed to the one size fits all approach which has been utilized prior to this study?
2. How could the district make the necessary gains among Hispanic populations without negatively impacting other academic programs across the district?

#### **Study Question 1**

*Could an EL model of instruction be developed which is tailored to the demographic/instructional needs of students in one sub-district within the Sampson County Schools LEA as opposed to the one size fits all approach which has been utilized prior to this study?*

There has been a very limited amount of collaboration with stakeholders in the development of plans for the instruction of ELs in Sampson County; no transition plan between schools; and no vertical planning among EL staff within the sub-districts which made up Sampson County Schools. Sampson County Schools provided a limited framework for EL instruction which did not focus on the needs of students in different grade spans which make up the sub-districts within the LEA. There were four of these sub-districts, each determined by the high school which the elementary schools and middle schools fed. The Union sub-district consisted of Union Elementary, Union Intermediate, Union Middle and Union High School. The Hobbton sub-district was composed of Hargrove Elementary, Hobbton Middle, and Hobbton High School. The Lakewood sub-district contained Roseboro Elementary, Salemburg Elementary, Roseboro-Salemburg Middle, and Lakewood High School. The last sub-district in Sampson County Schools was the Midway sub-district. It was composed of Clement Elementary, Plainview Elementary, Midway Elementary, Midway Middle, and Midway High School. There was a variety of modifications to this process which could be implemented in each sub-district in order to improve the achievement of Hispanic and EL students across the county.

This study was an evaluation of the collaborative process using three of the four schools which made up the Union sub-district within Sampson County Schools. This sub-district was selected due to it educating the highest population of EL students within the LEA. There was already buy-in among the leadership at each of these schools to embrace the educational needs of these students and a desire to work together to improve the educational experiences of the EL students who attended these schools (Wesley Johnson, personal communication, July 20,2018).

Probably the most important change involved the implementation of vertical alignment Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to individualize the EL instruction program based on

the needs of each of the schools within the Union sub-district. Instead of utilizing a top-down approach, those involved in the direct instruction of students at the school level were entrusted with the building of a more effective EL educational program. These PLCs were to include the EL teachers from the elementary school, intermediate school, and middle school within the sub-district, along with the principals of each of these schools to develop a list of needs and ways to address them based on the individual demographics and academic needs in each of the schools across the sub-district. This was intended to allow each school's EL leadership to develop a plan to improve the academic achievement among Hispanic and EL students based on the requirements of North Carolina's answer to the requirements of the Every Student Succeeds Act (2017). According to this state accountability mandate, each school was to be provided a letter grade for each subgroup present at the school. Of extreme importance in this model of accountability, EL performance on state-mandated examinations was to account for an equal portion of 80% of each school's letter grade as ELA EOG scores, Math EOG scores, and Science EOG scores at the elementary and middle school levels (Howard, Sonneman, & Molique, 2017; NC State Board of Education, 2018). This approach was to provide an opportunity for principals to utilize individual school data to assist in the development of a vertically aligned plan which met the needs of the students in their school and the sub-district.

Upon the completion of each of these school plans, a comprehensive plan was to be developed out of the earlier PLCs and this comprehensive plan was intended to be presented to the director of federal programs, elementary and middle grades curriculum directors, and the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Student Services. Upon acceptance, the comprehensive program was to be presented to the Sampson County Board of Education for approval and implemented at the school level, if required.

## **Study Question 2**

*How could the district make the necessary gains among Hispanic populations without negatively impacting other academic programs across the district?*

A portion of this study focused on the possible need for funding sources concerning improvements to the EL education program. Sampson County was a low-wealth district; therefore, every dollar available to the district had to be utilized carefully to ensure all students received the best education possible. Many of the program options which could have been implemented could also have been determined to be cost prohibitive, which had the potential to negatively impact the funding of other necessary educational programs supplied to students by the county.

The PLCs developed to create the localized instructional plans also addressed this question during the meetings. The discussions focused on the use of instructional dollars effectively to ensure current instructional programs were maintained while addressing possible changes needed in the teaching of EL students in the county. This program was intended to ensure the best use of instructional money was made while the requirements created by the state were fulfilled.

A structure was to be developed among this group of stakeholders to allow a constant cycle of improvement was provided in the completed plan. This cycle would was to provide a vehicle for constant improvement, ensuring the county met its goals over the long term.

### **Stakeholder Involvement and Matrix**

There were three groups of EL teachers/administrators who were to make up the stakeholder collaborative PLCs for this project. These collaborative meetings were intended to include the principals of each of the three traditional pre-secondary schools in the Union sub-

district, the EL lead teacher, EL teachers from each of the schools within the sub-district, the Assistant Superintendent for Instructional Services, the elementary and middle grades curriculum directors, and the Federal Programs Director. The PLCs were scheduled to be conducted during August and September of 2018. These meetings were to include the principals and EL teachers from each school in the Union sub-district. This PLC group was scheduled to meet weekly over a four-week period to develop a vertically aligned comprehensive plan for EL instruction based on the needs of each individual school. This group was also to develop a method for assessing/evaluating both the process and effectiveness of implementation for the instructional program instituted during these PLCs. The schools involved in this study included Union Elementary, Union Intermediate, and Union Middle School. There were 362 EL students in this sub-district requiring services (Geovana Concepcion, personal communication, July 1, 2018). By October 15, 2018, the comprehensive plan was to be compiled and presented to the Assistant Superintendent of Instructional Services, the elementary and middle grades curriculum coordinators, and the Federal Programs Director for review and approval. The Union sub-district implemented the plan on a trial basis from October 15 – December 20, 2018. A PLC meeting was held on January 7, 2019 to review this project based on the criteria developed during the PLCs at the beginning of the school year. These individuals were to discuss the plan and its implementation for modification for future study beyond the scope of this study during the second semester, as well.

This fulfilled a full PDSA cycle, where (1) PLCs were used to develop an instructional program which met the needs of students at the school level; (2) qualitative data were collected during the PLCs as well as during the short-term implementation phase of the program; (3) a follow-up meeting was conducted after the end of the semester to assess the effectiveness of the

program developed at the beginning of the school year, and; (4) modifications were made to the original program based on the data collected for implementation during the second semester.

After the completion of this project, the comprehensive plan for EL education for the Union sub-district was intended to be submitted for approval by the Sampson County Board of Education at the March, 2019 working meeting for implementation countywide during the 2019-20 school year. After this study was completed, further dates were provided as part of the project to show the continuation of PDSA cycles to eventually improve instruction for all ELs countywide. Table 1 provides a matrix for the above steps. Table 2 provides the originally intended meeting schedule for this project.

### **Evaluation**

The federal government and the state of North Carolina, have provided requirements for LEAs and schools to effectively prove Hispanic and EL students were being provided an effective English education. These guidelines made changes in the structure of EL programs in every LEA a requirement and a priority. There were several different programs being utilized around the United States to assist ELs in achieving success in an English based educational system. Each of these programs had its benefits and drawbacks. Parts of each, a specific program, or some totally new way of teaching these students was to be instituted in order for the district to achieve success in this area. Based on student performance data on ELA/Reading EOGs, Sampson County's model for providing instruction to ELs required a program evaluation to ensure EL students were successful.

The goal of this project was to build partnerships between teachers and administrators within the affected schools, utilizing improvement science and a bottom up approach, in order to transform the educational experiences of EL students throughout Sampson County. This was to



Table 1

*Inclusive Stakeholder Matrix*

Stakeholder Group	Donate Resources	Exhibity/Demonstrate	Educate/Train	Supportive Role
Primary PLCs				
Principals	Provide data concerning needs of individual schools within the districts	Coordinate needs of EL subgroup with school resources		
EL Teachers			Provide expertise in area of EL and migrant education	Assist in the discussion of using resources to improve impact of EL students' education
LEA EL Program Improvement Committee				
Assistant Superintendent for Instructional Services		Coordinate needs of EL subgroup with system resources		Approve plan for presentation to school board
Elementary and Middle Grades Curriculum Directors		Coordinate needs of EL subgroup with grade level resources		

Table 1 (continued)

Stakeholder Group	Donate Resources	Exhibity/Demonstrate	Educate/Train	Supportive Role
Director of Federal Programs	Coordinate resources to implement program based on available resources		Provide limitations based on federal program budgetary restraints	
Principal PLC Leaders	Provide completed plans for approval		Provide information concerning individual plans for approval	

Table 2

*Project Implementation Schedule (Proposed)*

Date	Activity
August 22, 2018	Union District PLC #1
September 5, 2018	Union District PLC #2
September 12, 2018	Union District PLC #3
September 26, 2018	Union District PLC #4
October 15, 2018	Presentation of Plan to LEA EL Program Improvement Committee
October 15-December 20, 2018	Implementation of Plan in the Union District
January 7, 2019	Evaluation of Project, Modification of Plan
**March 19, 2019	Presentation to Board
**Fall 2019	Full County Implementation

*Note.* \*\* Dates are beyond the scope of this project/further study.

be accomplished through the use of district level PLCs which produced a vertically aligned EL education program meeting the specific needs of the schools within the Union Sub-District. These PLCs were to be operate on a specific time table to ensure a program was developed which could be approved and implemented during the 2019-20 school year countywide.

Once implementation occurred countywide, the completed plan was to be revisited on a bi-annual basis, based on EL data gleaned through administration of the NC Testing Program and ACCESS testing to ensure state and federal requirements were being met for this subgroup of students.

## **CHAPTER 4: PLAN DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION**

### **Introduction**

The goal of this study was to utilize a series of teacher led PLCs in the Union sub-district to develop an EL plan of instruction for use in order to improve EL performance on state-mandated exams every student from third through eighth grade was required to take to match the guidelines set by ESSA. Each of these meetings was designed to show the process required to develop a plan of instruction which could be utilized in classrooms for this end. In order to show a numerical measure for growth, an analysis of data from state-created benchmarks was conducted.

The course of this series of PLCs was designed as one PDSA Cycle of Improvement. The first four PLCs developed the specific objective and plan for implementation of the desired change (the Planning stage). After these PLCs, the plan was implemented and data were collected concerning the plan effectiveness (the Do stage). A follow-up PLC was completed at the change of semesters to analyzed and compared to the original problem to determine if there was positive growth indicated, changes were made to the original plan, and the latest incarnation of the plan of instruction was implemented (the Study and Act stages) (Lemire, Chritie, & Inkelas, 2017).

### **District PLCs**

Four sub-district level PLCs were conducted among teachers at Union Elementary, Union Intermediate, and Union Middle starting on 22 August 2018 to complete the Planning stage of the Improvement Science Cycle of Improvement. The meeting dates were modified from the original plan due to faculty requirements by administration at each of the schools (see Table 3). The dates of these meetings were 22 August, 10 September, 24 September and 5 October. Each

Table 3

*Project Implementation Schedule (Actual)*

Date	Activity
August 22, 2018	Union District PLC #1
September 7, 2018	Union District PLC #2
October 8, 2018	Union District PLC #3
October 11, 2018	Compilation of Plan of Instruction Components
October 15, 2018	Union District PLC #4
October 15, 2018	Submission of Plan to County Curriculum Leadership
October 15-December 20, 2018	Implementation of Plan in the Union District
January 7, 2019	Evaluation of Project, Modification of Plan
**March 19, 2019	Presentation to Board
**Fall 2019	Full County Implementation

*Note.* \*\* Dates are beyond the scope of this project/further study.

of the EL and an EL teacher assistant at the aforementioned schools was in attendance at the meeting. The original plan called for the attendance of building level administrators at each of these meetings. Meetings with principals were conducted by the project leader in this study, but these leaders were not as involved in the process as originally planned. Administrators were willing to sign letters of approval to conduct research (see Appendix B), but other supervisory requirements kept these individuals from attending the scheduled meetings. As the only available school level administrator, the project leader provided individual attention for this project.

### **Union Sub-District PLC #1**

The first of four sub-district level PLCs occurred on 22 August 2018 at Union Elementary School. Four EL teachers, one EL teacher assistant, and the project leader met to discuss the project and start the process of developing a plan of instruction. Three of the EL teachers in attendance were assigned to Union Elementary School; Mr. Pedro Carrion, Ms. Maria Pena, and Ms. Rosa Unas. Union Intermediate School had one EL teacher assigned, Mr. James Roa. A teacher assistant, Ms. Wendy Santivanez, was assigned to Union Middle School. An overview of the project was provided to everyone in attendance. The teachers and teacher assistant indicated support for the project and showed enthusiasm towards assisting this group of students with their performance levels in the classroom and on state-level examinations.

After the overview of the project was completed, a discussion as to the direction/focus of the efforts was undertaken. The EL teachers in the sub-district had a desire to provide instruction in a more focused way than the plan the county had subscribed. A vast majority of students received consultative services in the county based on the structured used at the time. The teachers in the PLC desired a move towards a Dual Immersion program instead. This would provide students and the district with the greatest proficiency growth for the amount of money

spent (P. Carrion, personal communication, August 22, 2018). Even a move towards a Structured English Immersion program might have provided increased growth among these students, according to J. Roa (personal communication, August 22, 2018).

There was a debate as to whether the focus should pertain to ACCESS testing or the state-level tests students are expected to accomplish in every grade level between grades 3 and 8. At the elementary school level, among EL teachers, there has been a focus on improving speaking and writing scores on the yearly ACCESS test battery EL students complete.

Based on the original proposal data points taken from Reading EOG scores, it was determined the best course of action was to develop a plan based on state-level EOGs as opposed to the ACCESS tests. The rationale for this decision was multi-faceted: (1) focusing on reading skills was determined to be a way to enhance performance on all testing students encounter during the school year, both state-level and the ACCESS tests; (2) using the North Carolina Standard Course of Study English Language Arts (NCSCS: ELA) as the basis for improvements aligned the proposal data to the performance portion of this project (NC Department of Public Instruction, 2017); (3) and the standards for ACCESS testing were deemed to be cumbersome and restrictive, whereas the ELA standards could be translated across the elementary and middle school curricula.

By focusing on improvements to the instructional practices used in classrooms as opposed to the installation of a new program based on the immersion style programs used in other states, it was thought that gains could be made without creating additional costs for the county. This was determined to be true based on personnel issues across the district and the limitations this issue created at the individual schools. The example cited by J. Roa was the limitation of only having one EL teacher assigned to the intermediate school and the fact there



was only a teacher assistant assigned to service all of the EL students at Union Middle School (personal communication, August 22, 2018).

Each individual left this meeting with the task of reading the ELA Standard Course of Study. After reading this document, everyone was to return with ideas of how to improve the instructional practices and proficiency levels of K-8 EL students at the next PLC.

### **Union Sub-District PLC #2**

The second PLC of the project occurred on Monday, September 7, 2018 at Union Middle School. This meeting started as a step back from where the initial meeting concluded. Mr. Carrion was still concerned with improving ACCESS scores, especially in the area of speaking. A discussion was held about possible ways of incorporating ACCESS information into the plan of instruction which was to be developed. It was determined among the EL teachers that the issue with student performance on the ACCESS test was an issue with the technical portion of the test, not an instructional problem. Students may be shy while speaking during the test, whereby students would fail to speak clearly enough to be successful on the exam. This problem was true of students who spoke English well, as well as those who have limited proficiency (P. Carrion, personal communication, September 7, 2018). It was determined focusing in this area would be impossible to measure and therefore not a necessary area requiring attention in this project.

The ACCESS test of reading comprehension was another topic of discussion at this PLC. The teachers determined this test is not as rigorous as the EOG, based on experience. The ACCESS test focused on using the English language instead of applying content level learning, as is the case with the reading EOG (J. Roa, personal communication, September 7, 2018). This

lack of rigor on the ACCESS test brought the planning full circle to where the group was during the first PLC.

There was also a discussion about what data set could be utilized to show growth among students. The issue was brought up because the Institutional Review Board wanted a data set to be used to assist in the determination of improvement among students. It was agreed data would be utilized from the North Carolina Check-Ins for students from grades 4-8 who have been required by the county to complete them in order to help determine effectiveness of instruction. These exams were benchmark tests provided by the Department of Public Instruction to provide individual student data over the school year in reading so teachers could further individualize instruction based on the needs of each student (NC Department of Instruction/Accountability Services, 2018).

A final decision was made to develop a plan for improving student reading performance in order to enhance the success rates on the reading EOGs each student is required to complete each school year. The next debate centered on how to develop a plan based on the state ELA standards which would be usable by all teachers, not just those in the EL classroom. It was decided that the final plan would take each anchor standard in the NCSCS: ELA and create a set of strategies and resources for teachers to use in the classroom to enhance instruction for EL students. This focus on strategies would allow teachers to develop rigorous lessons which utilized effective strategies which met the needs of the target group of students.

The NCSCS: ELA was broken down into three areas which related to the required reading skills of all students: Reading: Literature; Reading: Informational Text; and Reading: Foundational Skills (NC Department of Public Instruction, 2017). The members of the group decided the foundational skills portion of the standards were covered as long as the other areas

which focus on literary and informational texts were covered appropriately. After this determination was made, the anchor standards for the literature section of the NCSCS: ELA of the document were split up amongst members of the team with each member to provide the required information by the next meeting for the actual development of a physical document.

### **Union Sub-District PLC #3**

The third PLC meeting occurred at Union Middle School on Monday October 8, 2018. Hurricane Florence caused the district to close for nine instructional days in September increasing the gap between PLC meetings. Between the second PLC and this one, each of the EL personnel, as well as the project leader, had attended a two-day North Carolina Department of Public Instruction led professional development seminar on the SIOP model of instruction. This training provided a series of strategies for utilization in enhancing the instructional practices in every classroom no matter the content area. After this training, each member of the EL instructional team across the county was tasked with training teachers at their individual schools in the use of these strategies in classrooms (L. Carr, personal communication, October 4, 2018). As all of these strategies were expected to be taught to content teachers, the group decided to incorporate them into the plan of instruction.

There was a debate about the format of the document which would be used when all of the required components were compiled. The project leader suggested a format similar to how NCDPI had released unpacked curriculum documents when the shift was made from the traditional standard courses of study to essential standards. This format placed an anchor standard in the left column of the document with two sub-columns to the right, one for strategies and the other for resources (see Appendix C).

Teachers split up the anchor standards for informational texts amongst themselves. All of the strategies/resources were to be completed and submitted to the project leader by Thursday, October 11, 2018. After these were submitted, the document was to be developed and electronic copies provided to each member of the team so the final meeting prior to implementation could occur on Monday, October 15, 2018.

Each teacher provided their information to the project leader by the end of the school day on Wednesday, October 10. The project leader, therefore compiled the information into the appropriate format as decided by the team during PLC #3 (see Appendix C), and sent copies to each individual involved on Thursday, October 11, 2018.

#### **Union Sub-District PLC #4**

The final pre-implementation PLC occurred on October 15, 2018 at Union Middle School. This collaborative effort was brief; small changes were made to the final document and discussing the implementation process. Several corrections were made to the document (see Appendix C). Members of the team took the document for implementation between October 16 and December 21, 2018 in their classrooms.

#### **Implementation**

Physical copies of the document were sent to the Federal Programs Director, the Middle and Elementary Grades Curriculum Directors on October 15, 2018. This action was followed with an email to the Federal Programs Director on October 19, 2018 requesting feedback, as none had been received from the physical copies sent (see Appendix D). Another email was sent to the Federal Programs Director, the Elementary Grades Curriculum Director and the Middle Grades Curriculum Director on October 22, 2018 after the email to the Federal Programs

Director had failed to elicit a response (see Appendix E). The Elementary Grades Curriculum Director responded to this email on October 23, 2018 (see Appendix F).

The leadership at the county level in Sampson County has been in flux since the beginning of this project. The Assistant Superintendent for Instructional Services was hired by Clinton City Schools in the role of Superintendent. Subsequently, the Federal Programs Director was then promoted to the role of Assistant Superintendent with the additional responsibilities of her former position as Federal Programs Director. The Middle Grades Curriculum Director was hired by Clinton City Schools as Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources. These personnel changes hindered communications for this project as each of these individuals has moved into new roles. The one individual who remains in the same position as prior to the development phase of the project was been the one individual who provided input.

#### **Data Analysis: Check-Ins 1 and 2**

As part of the process of clearing the Institutional Review Board (IRB) and as a measure for the Study phase of the PDSA cycle, there were questions among committee members as to how this project was to be measured analytically. As the scope of this project was planned to coincide with the first term of the 2018-19 school year, this created a conundrum. At the elementary and middle school levels, there was very little state-level testing which was conducted, especially in reading. Some LEAs accomplished district level benchmarks over the course of the school year in an attempt to determine where students were in their proficiency levels at any particular point of the school year. This provided the LEA with a means of comparing students in different classrooms and students across the district to attempt to ascertain what remediation steps were required in order to develop increased proficiency levels at the end of the school year when students complete the required EOGs.

In order to achieve this end, Sampson County elected to use a series of state provided benchmark exams known as NC Check-Ins. According to the NC Department of Public Instruction/Accountability Services (2018), NC Check-Ins were specifically designed in line with the required state standards for reading. These exams broke the total curriculum into chunks, similarly to a district benchmark, allowing students to be assessed on different portions of the reading curriculum over the course of an entire school year. These assessments were given three times per school year, the first in October, the second in January, and the third in March. The goal of this program of assessments was to provide students, teachers and other stakeholders data to utilize to determine areas of strength and areas for needed growth in order for students to achieve proficiency on the reading EOG (NC Department of Public Instruction/Accountability Services, 2018).

In order to successfully navigate the process for achieving approval to conduct this study, NC Check-In data from the first two Check-Ins was proposed and accepted by the IRB. Though this was not the most effective means to assess EL proficiency levels, the EL PLC team agreed with utilizing these assessments as a way to assess student score improvement over the period of the study. According to K. Maxey-Moore (2018), it should be noted NCDPI stated, as recently as October 18, 2018, using this data to assess schools, classrooms and students with these data was not an effective method for assessing an educational program. As these are benchmark exams, there were parts of the curriculum assessed in these exams which may not have been covered in individual classrooms. The testing windows for testing were over a month long and district calendars varied across the state, leading to inaccurate data when used as a broad method of assessing classes and students. The intent of these exams was to provide teachers with a method of assessing students against directly related standards based on what has been taught. Teachers

had the ability to eliminate data from these exams when students had not been provided instruction on all areas of the test (see Appendix G) (Maxey-Moore, K., 2018). A further drawback to using this testing as a measure of student progress was that third-grade students did not take the NC Check-Ins. This was due to these students not having a normed test from second-grade to develop an effective batch of questions for use in the exam (NC Department of Public Instruction/Accountability Services, 2018)

The following sections will make comparisons between EL reading EOG scores at the conclusion of the 2017-18 school year with the performance of these same cohorts of students on the first two sets of NC Check-Ins during the 2018-19 school year.

#### **Fourth-Grade Cohort Proficiency**

This cohort of students completed their first round of state required EOG testing during the 2017-18 school year at the end of third-grade. According to the NCDPI, only 33.3% of third-grade EL students at Union Elementary school were proficient on the reading EOG last school year (2018b). When compared with this cohort's performance on NC Check-In 1, these same students were 56.6% proficient at the end of October, 2018 (WinScan, 2018a). After the second round of NC Check-Ins, this cohort of students showed a proficiency rate of 59.0%. These data indicated this group of students continued to strengthen in the area of proficiency over the course of the school year, this time by more than 2% over the previous examinations (see Figure 9) (WinScan, 2019a).

#### **Fifth-Grade Cohort Proficiency**

During the 2017-2018 school year, this cohort completed the fourth-grade reading EOG. EL students' proficiency rates on this exam were 32.1% on this exam (NC Department of Public Instruction, 2018c). In similarity to fourth-grade students, these ELs showed growth in

proficiency on the first NC Check-In. The overall proficiency rate among ELs on this exam was 56.6% (WinScan, 2018b). When this group of students completed the second NC Check-In in Reading, 65.4% were proficient. This cohort showed similar growth as the fourth-grade cohort, though the increase in proficiency scores was even stronger, indicating an increase of more than 8% from the prior exam (see Figure 9) (WinScan, 2019b).

### **Sixth-Grade Cohort Proficiency**

The 2018-19 school year's sixth-grade class at Union Middle School completed the fifth-grade reading EOG during the 2017-18 school year. On this exam, 34.0% of students reached the required level of proficiency set by the state of North Carolina (NC Department of Public Instruction, 2018c). When this group completed NC Check-In 1, their proficiency rate fell slightly to 32.0% (WinScan, 2018c). There were large gains among these students on the second set of Check-Ins. On this exam, 40.9% students showed proficiency. This result indicated positive growth from both the first exam (nearly 9%) and almost 7% stronger than they did on the fifth-grade reading EOG (see Figure 9) (WinScan, 2019c).

### **Seventh-Grade Cohort Proficiency**

The seventh-grade cohort of EL students for 2018-19 completed the sixth-grade reading EOG the previous school year. On this exam, 34.4% of these students were proficient (NC Department of Public Instruction, 2018d). When these students completed the first NC Check-In of their seventh-grade year, yet again, there was a slight decline in student scores, with 32.3% of them showing proficiency on the areas tested (WinScan, 2018d). This group of students indicated further growth over both the EOG which was completed at the end of the previous school year and the first NC Check-In of the 2018-19 school year. On NC Check-In 2, 36.7% of



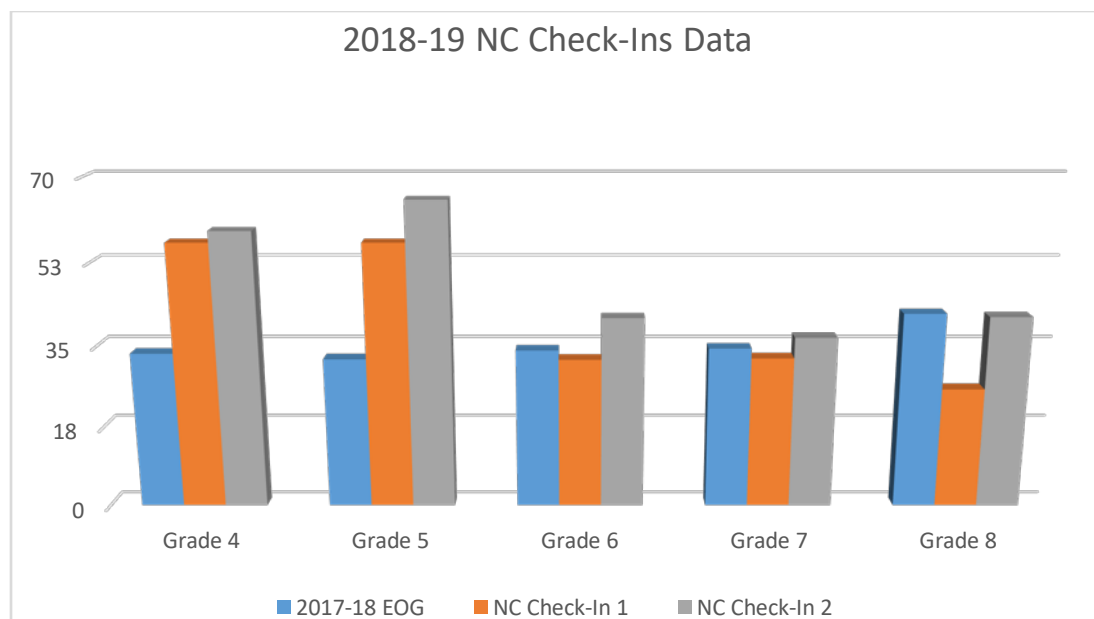
students were proficient, a more than two percentage point gain over the former and four points over the latter (see Figure 9) (WinScan, 2019d).

### **Eighth-Grade Cohort Proficiency**

Of the current middle school level EL students, those who were in the seventh-grade during the 2017-18 school year performed the best. Of these students, 41.8% were proficient on the seventh-grade Reading EOG (Public Schools of North Carolina, 2018d). This cohort dropped their proficiency rate by over 16 points on the first check-in, with only 25.6% showing proficiency (WinScan, 2018e). There were significant gains among members of this cohort on NC Check-In 2. The data from this exam indicated 41.1% of these students were proficient on the exam. This was much stronger than the test from earlier in the year, but remained .7% behind the proficiency rates this cohort of students from the previous year's EOG (see Figure 9) (WinScan, 2019e).

### **Evaluation of Project/Modification of Plan PLC**

As was required in improvement science to start the Do and Study phases of the PSA cycle, the EL teachers in the Union sub-district instituted the plan on October 16 as scheduled according to the implementation schedule. Immediately following the implementation of the EL Plan of Instruction, the first round of NC Check-Ins was completed in reading by fourth through eighth-grade students. As shown in the preceding section (see Figure 9), EL student performance indicated a further need for growth among these students. The implementation of the Plan of Instruction among these students had the capacity to indicate enhancement of scoring among these students.



*Note.* (WinScan, 2018a-e; WinScan, 2019a-e).

*Figure 9.* 2018-19 NC Check-ins data.

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The EL teachers and project leader met one final time on January 7, 2019, after students returned from winter break, once first school term had ended, and prior to the second round of NC Check-Ins. This meeting completed the PDSA cycle. All members of the group were in accordance that the plan of instruction was assisting them in improving their instruction with their students. They were hopeful the work accomplished would translate into improved scores among EL students on the second set of NC Check-Ins, scheduled for February 2019 (M. Pena, et al., personal communication, January 7, 2019).

Changes to the structure of the EL program in Sampson County Schools were discussed again at this meeting. These teachers really wanted to move toward a more structured class schedule which would allow more time with students. This led to a conversation about the different programs for scheduling and teaching students utilized in other parts of country. P. Carrion really wanted to press for the institution of a more developed style of instruction where groups of students could be provided instruction in English (personal communication, January 7, 2019).

Ideas focused on improving the EL Plan of Instruction developed in the fall of 2018 occurred during this meeting. Several of the teachers provided insight into strategies which were effective and others which needed to be added to the plan were discussed. M. Pena and R. Unas provided information concerning the positive impact graphic organizers and visual aids had with their students when teaching students how to dissect informational text (personal communication, January 7, 2019). This led to graphic organizers being moved to the top of the list of strategies in the plan and technological instruction being added to the bottom of the list for CCR Anchor Standard RI.7 and CCR Anchor Standard RI.8 (see Appendix C).

In order to improve the strength of CCR Anchor Standard RL.5, CCR Anchor Standard RL.6, CCR Anchor Standard RI.5 and CCR Anchor Standard RI.6, W. Santivanez offered several modifications. In order to increase reading comprehension, both literature and informational texts from different classrooms were being read aloud in her EL classroom. This additional reading improved student comprehension and thereby English skills. The use of highlighters for determining key words, especially in informational text were a focus, as well. The teacher suggested adding additional websites to the lists to further enhance instruction (see Appendix C) (W. Santivanez, personal communication, January 7, 2019).

According to J. Roa, the addition of Collaborative Strategic Reading was suggested (personal communication, January 7, 2019). Using this strategy, students were directed to locate difficult words. This strategy required students to reread sentences, attempting to use strategies including: context clues, breaking words apart, and looking for known prefixes and suffixes to determine the meaning of these words (Klingner & Vaughn, 1999). This strategy proved effective formatively, according to the teacher (J. Roa, personal communication, January 7, 2019).

At the close of this meeting, the EL teachers involved in the study agreed to continue to utilize the strategies during the second term of the school year. These teachers were determined to continue enhancing the EL Plan of Instruction through the use of future PLC meetings and based on findings in subsequent testing cycles completed by students. There was hope students would perform more proficiently on the upcoming second round of NC Check-Ins (scheduled for the end of January 2019) (see Figure 9).

## **Summary**

In order to attempt to decrease the achievement gap between EL and traditional students indicated by five years of reading EOG data in Sampson County Schools, the project leader developed a program of PLCs designed to create a “teacher friendly”, usable EL Plan of Instruction utilizing the expertise of EL professionals in Sampson County according to the Improvement Science method of introducing changes with PDSA cycles. This approach was completed to ascertain the effectiveness of the project utilizing the expertise of EL teachers in the Union sub-district of Sampson County Schools. This sub-district was selected due to the large EL population in this portion of the county.

The group of educators and the project leader met on four occasions, starting on August 22, 2018 to develop the plan. Detailed discussions about different styles of EL education programs were completed and a decision as to how to proceed was decided upon. These teachers and a teacher assistant decided the best way to assist these students in English acquisition and improve the proficiency rates of EL students in all areas tested with NC state exams was to create a set of strategies and resources based on the NCSCS: ELA. This decision was made based on the link of reading standards to all other curricula required by the state of North Carolina.

The EL Plan of Instruction was completed on October 15, 2018, and was put into practice immediately by these EL teachers and teacher assistant in the sub-district. Shortly after the implementation of the plan, students across the district completed a round of focused reading examinations by grade level created by the state of North Carolina. These exams (benchmarks) were designed to be completed three times per year by all students from grade four through grade eight. This testing provided educators with data concerning the proficiency of individual students

based on specific objectives and standards in the NCSCS: ELA. The first round of this testing, referred to as NC Check-In 1, indicated slight growth among elementary students when compared to results from the reading EOG tests completed as cohorts from the 2017-18 school year. At the middle school level, results indicated negative growth among all cohort groups of students.

After the end of the first term of the school year and upon the return of teachers and students after winter break, a final PLC for this project occurred to evaluate the plan of instruction and make changes moving forward. Teachers and the teacher assistant provided input concerning the plan and these modifications were added. These teachers were hopeful the second round of benchmark testing would indicate growth as these individuals had two months to implement the strategies and utilize the resources provided prior to this testing.

The second round of NC Check-In testing was conducted among the same groups of students at the end of January. This testing showed significant growth among EL students from both the baseline proficiency rates from the 2017-18 school year and those from NC Check-In 1.

## **CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The purpose of this study was to utilize PLCs made up of EL teachers to develop an EL Plan of Instruction in order to decrease the achievement gap between this group and the dominant culture in Sampson County Schools. An additional focus of the study pertained to controlling the costs of such an effort in order to prevent other academic programs from suffering financially.

Though there were necessary modifications made to the planning and development stage, due to personnel changes, limited administrator participation, and weather considerations due to Hurricane Florence, the PLCs were ultimately successful. An EL Plan of Instruction based on the NCSCOC: ELA was developed on schedule. This plan was incorporated into the EL instructional program at Union Elementary, Union Intermediate, and Union Middle Schools as originally planned. Data from the NC Check-Ins program were analyzed to attempt to ascertain the benefits of the instructional program among EL students. These data sets indicated positive growth among students between the first and second rounds of these state-level benchmark exams.

This chapter concludes the study with the following: (a) conclusions based on the study's questions, (b) implications for administrative practice, (c) recommendations for further study, and (d) a chapter summary.

### **Conclusions**

*Could an EL model of instruction be developed which is tailored to the demographic/instructional needs of students in one sub-district within the Sampson County Schools LEA as opposed to the one size fits all approach which had been utilized prior to this study?*

This study confirmed a group of subject matter experts in EL could be brought together to form a cohesive PLC which focused on improving the performance of the EL sub-group. These teachers utilized the NCSCS: ELA to develop and implement a plan of instruction tailored to the needs of both teachers and students in order to improve student performance. This plan was developed using ELA standards due to the influence these standards had on all content areas taught in Sampson County Schools.

Multiple forms of EL instruction were discussed in these PLCs in order to ascertain which would have been the most effective. These conversations decided that the future of EL instruction should end with the implementation of a Dual Immersion program in Sampson County, though due to personnel and monetary limitations, this was not possible at the time of this study. The use of the plan of instruction developed by these teachers was determined to provide a framework for improving student scores through better lesson planning based on focused strategies and resources while maintaining the structure of support provided in the Sampson County Model of EL Instruction (see Appendix C).

Implementation of the plan occurred on October 15, 2018 in the Union sub-district. In November, 2018, students from Union Intermediate and Union Middle Schools completed the first round of state created and managed benchmarks called NC Check-Ins. The data from these exams indicated a decline in proficiency by cohort among the EL students who took these exams when compared to these students' reading EOG scores from the 2017-18 school year. The limited time between the implementation of the plan of instruction and the completion of these exams appeared to have limited the impact of this study on EL student performance.

Immediately after winter break, the teachers involved in this study met to discuss the plan and make modifications. These changes were added to the plan and instituted in classrooms



immediately. After three months of implementation, the second state NC Check-In benchmark was completed by fourth through eighth-grade students. EL students showed increased proficiency on these exams, both when compared to their EOG proficiency scores from the 2017-18 school year and the first NC Check-In. These data indicated a possible correlation between the implementation of the EL Plan of Instruction and student performance on these exams (see Figure 9).

*How could the district make the necessary gains among Hispanic populations without negatively impacting other academic programs across the district?*

Discussions during the PLC meetings focused on modifying the instructional program utilized in Sampson County with programs used elsewhere in the United States. Each of these programs, Structured English Immersion, Transitional Bilingual Education, Developmental Bilingual Education, and Dual Immersion were discussed. Each of these programs had a cost associated with them, both in personnel and monetarily. Based on the current financial situation in Sampson County and the lack of personnel capital in the system, it was decided the best plan of action was to not create any financial demand on Sampson County Schools. The plan was developed in such a way as to be usable by all teachers, not just EL teachers, to be usable in all subject areas, and with zero financial cost to Sampson County Schools.

### **Implications for Administrative Practice**

The most important function of district level educational leaders is developing effective teachers and building level administrators. This study indicates the effectiveness of PLCs in the improvement process for educational programs. Many new teachers join the faculty of schools with the belief they are on their own to succeed or fail. District level administrators need to discuss and encourage these teachers to become involved in the PLC process at the school level

from their first day of employment to create a culture of idea sharing and improvement. This culture shift is critical for new principals, as well. In an era of ever decreasing budgets, principals must be expected to utilize the strength of their staff to improve the educational programs offered through the use of vertically aligned PLCs. Instituting these collaborative meetings allows for the exchange of ideas and institution of improvements for all students in the school. Utilizing an educational grassroots method to improve instructional practices is both effective and a way to develop immediate buy-in for educational change.

This study created a PLC utilizing the EL teachers from the feeder schools attached to Union High School in the Union sub-district. The study was intended to focus on either introducing a new style/program of instruction for ELs or work within the existing framework utilized by the school system. It was decided to work within that already determined framework.

Educational leaders must make instructional program decisions based on the economic means available for use in this area. Without the financial means to implement a complete overhaul of the system, finding ways to improve experiences for students must be considered and put into practice. This assists in the assurance of fidelity in implementation of the program. If leaders are not careful, new programs are instituted when there are funds in order to produce immediate gains. When the funds disappear, so do the programs. This can be detrimental to students impacted by these programs instead of actually improving conditions over time.

Consistency within LEAs among leadership creates the possibility of implementation fidelity issues for educational leaders as well. Studies have been conducted to improve teacher retention, but leadership turnover, both from retirement or transfer to other systems, create complications for the implementation of new programs. Maintaining buy-in for educational programs, especially when the scope is on one sub-group can evaporate with administrative

changes at the district level, creating a changing educational dynamic and ending of programs which can be seen as superfluous, thereby limiting possible positive changes.

Educational systems are dynamic organizations. Plans must be able to be modified based on the current circumstances facing the LEA. Limitations in development and implementation can be negatively impacted by issues like natural disasters. The best created plans can be derailed or have to be modified when students attend school only nine months out of the calendar year and the region being served is damaged by large scale environmental disasters like a hurricane. Educating the students in southeastern North Carolina brings with it this possibility on a yearly basis. This makes adaptability a key to the successful development and implementation of educational programs.

Another issue with program development and implementation for educational leaders is determining how long to conduct a small-scale project to determine feasibility before instituting the plan in a larger scale. Providing enough cycles of testing data to prove a program successful stifles progress in a dynamic educational setting. Decisions need to be made quickly in this type of environment in order to show gains. The state of North Carolina requires schools to make positive gains yearly. Administrators need to be able to utilize the instructional experts in their system to improve the educational program collectively, while trusting these individuals to effectively support students instructionally.

### **Recommendations for Further Study**

There are multiple recommendations for further study which can be attempted to enhance this work. Each of these areas for additional study can help ensure EL students in Sampson County receive the instruction necessary to eliminate the achievement gap with traditional English speaking students.

This study utilized two cycles of NC Check-ins data to assist in the determination as to whether this study was indicating increased instructional success. In order to ensure the success rates with this program, two more data points can be collected to further show success. The first of these is scheduled for mid-March, 2019 with the final set of NC Check-Ins. This testing will provide individualized data by student on the final set of objectives in the NCSCS: ELA prior to the end of year testing required by the state of North Carolina. After this testing is complete, all students are required to complete EOG testing in reading at the end of the school year. By utilizing the previous year's EOG data, NC Check-Ins 1-3 data, and current school year EOG data, a system can determine how effective this program is over the course of an entire year, thereby enhancing the findings of the study.

In order to increase the success rate of this study further, another PDSA cycle could be completed by meeting with the PLC members after EOG testing. The use of two PDSA cycles provide additional modifications of the instructional plan based on both additional testing and more implementation time. EL teachers would have the opportunity to meet an additional time to improve instruction, discuss improvements to the plan, coordinate efforts, and further reflect on the learning process.

In order to receive a deeper understanding of the benefits of this program, the addition of another sub-district within Sampson County Schools of the EL Plan of Instruction is necessary for a semester (or one PDSA cycle). This would allow additional data from another group of students previously un-served by these recently added instructional practices. It would also provide additional EL teachers to join the discussion for plan improvements and reflection at the end of the school year. The addition of more educators into the PLC provides opportunity for teachers to further network, increase best practices, and build esprit de corps across the county.

This study provides a framework for assisting all students in becoming proficient on the reading EOG. Creating PLCs of traditional classroom teachers developed and led by EL teachers at each school can be utilized to increase the comprehensiveness of the plan as well as turn the EL Plan of Instruction into a model for improved instruction for all students (Carr, J., personal communication, October 22, 2018) (see Appendix E).

Introduction of the plan full scale should be studied during another school year. Small scale success has been indicated in the available test score sets in the Union sub-district. After the spring term, there will be a set of EOG data which can be used to enhance the plan further for this implementation. By instituting the plan full scale, the LEA can show there is a possible way to improve EL proficiency without spending the required money to implement programs the county cannot afford.

Based on PLC notes and discussions, further study is needed in ways to institute a Dual Immersion program in a low wealth district. Research indicates the value of this type of program. Though this is not currently a possibility in Sampson County, the opportunity remains for gains to be made among students using this type of program so long as the costs can be either reduced or eliminated.

### **Chapter Summary**

The results from this study indicate a plan of instruction can be created by EL teachers to enhance classroom instruction. This plan was cost effective, costing the LEA zero dollars. Available score reports among ELs indicated growth among students from the point of program initiation and the second set of NC Check-Ins.

Several implications and areas for further study were indicated by the study, both within the county and by other LEAs/researchers. The implications indicated by the study included:

economic limitations of the district; personnel changes; the impact of weather on the school calendar; and the length of the program study. Both local and non-local areas of further study were indicated as well. At the local level, the following areas should be studied further: using additional testing data; using a second PDSA cycle; and increasing the study's reach to two sub-districts in the LEA. Non-local areas for further study include: creating PLCs of traditional classroom teachers led by EL teachers to enhance instruction for all students; full scale implementation across an LEA; and researching how to implement a Dual Immersion program in a low wealth school district, especially if there is a way to institute the program with zero net cost.

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## APPENDIX A: INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL

EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY

University & Medical Center Institutional Review Board

4N-64 Brody Medical Sciences Building · Mail Stop 682

600 Moye Boulevard · Greenville, NC 27834

Office 252-744-2914 · Fax 252-744-2284 · [www.ecu.edu/ORIC/irb](http://www.ecu.edu/ORIC/irb)

### Notification of Exempt Certification

From: Social/Behavioral IRB

To: [Heath Brewer](#)

CC: [Jim McDowelle](#)

Date: 10/15/2018

Re: [UMCIRB 18-001758](#)

DEVELOPING A COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAM FOR EL INSTRUCTION

I am pleased to inform you that your research submission has been certified as exempt on 10/15/2018. This study is eligible for Exempt Certification under category #1.

It is your responsibility to ensure that this research is conducted in the manner reported in your application and/or protocol, as well as being consistent with the ethical principles of the Belmont Report and your profession.

This research study does not require any additional interaction with the UMCIRB unless there are proposed changes to this study. Any change, prior to implementing that change, must be submitted to the UMCIRB for review and approval. The UMCIRB will determine if the change impacts the eligibility of the research for exempt status. If more substantive review is required, you will be notified within five business days.

The Chairperson (or designee) does not have a potential for conflict of interest on this study.

## APPENDIX B: LETTERS OF APPROVAL FOR RESEARCH

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**Sampson County  
Board of Education**  
Tim Register, Board Chair  
Kim Schmidlin, Vice Chair  
Robert Burley  
Tracy Dunn  
Sonya Powell  
Pat Usher  
Darryl Warren



437 Rowan Rd., Suite 13  
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Dr. Eric C. Bracy  
Superintendent

---

Mr. Heath Brewer, Doctoral Candidate  
East Carolina University  
Via University of North Carolina at Pembroke Cohort

This letter is to inform you that Sampson County Schools grants you permission to conduct research in our school system in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership. We look forward to the forthcoming information and recommendations for our English Learners program as you complete the work for your dissertation topic, *A study of the Achievement Gap Between Hispanic and Non-Hispanic Students-A Challenge in Sampson County Schools*. Our Board of Education and Superintendent are aware of this project and support your work.

Respectfully,

Dr. Wesley Scott Johnson  
Assistant Superintendent of Instructional Services  
Sampson County Schools  
437 Rowan Road  
Clinton NC, 28328

---

**Sampson County  
Board of Education**  
Tim Register, Board Chair  
Kim Schmidlin, Vice Chair  
Robert Burley  
Tracy Dunn  
Sonya Powell  
Pat Usher  
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Dr. Eric C. Bracy  
Superintendent

---

To: Doctoral Committee East Carolina University  
Re: Doctoral Candidate Mr. Heath Brewer (via UNC Pembroke Cohort)  
Effective Date: November 1, 2019

This letter is to inform you of a personnel change within Sampson County Schools leadership team. Earlier this year our Assistant Superintendent of Instructional Services Dr. Wesley Johnson accepted a position as the Superintendent of Clinton City Schools. Dr. Johnson was the originally approved contact for Sampson County Schools working directly with Mr. Brewer on his dissertation proposal *A Study of the Achievement Gap Between Hispanic and Non-Hispanic Students – A Challenge in Sampson County Schools*. I was aware of the approval for permission to conduct research in our school system in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership as I served as the director with our ESL staff. As the Federal Programs Director, I am familiar with Mr. Brewer's work and have invited him to be apart of our ESL professional development opportunities. I have moved from the Federal Programs Director to the Assistant Superintendent of Instructional Services in October, I hope to be able to continue supporting Mr. Brewer in this worthwhile topic and look forward to having him share his findings with our ESL and administrative teams in Sampson County Schools. We welcome the recommendations this study will provide to serve our EL students.

Thank you for your continued support. Please reach out if I can serve the committee or Mr. Brewer in any manner regarding his work with our English Learners and completing his doctoral program.

Sincerely,  
  
Dr. Linda Jewell Carr  
Assistant Superintendent of Instructional Services  
Sampson County Schools  
437 Rowan Road, Clinton, NC, 28328  
(910) 592-1401 ext 20133  
(910) 385-7168 cell  
[ljcarr@sampson.k12.nc.us](mailto:ljcarr@sampson.k12.nc.us)

#### SCHOOL PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Dear Institutional Review Board:

The purpose of this letter is to inform you that I give Heath Brewer, Assistant Principal, Union Middle School permission to conduct the research titled *Developing a comprehensive program for EL instruction at the individual school level: A challenge in Sampson County Schools* at Union Middle School. This also serves as assurance that this school complies with requirements of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) (see back for specific requirements) and will ensure that these requirements are followed in the conduct of this research.

Sincerely,



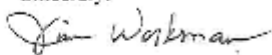
Dr. Theresa Melenas  
Principal, Union Middle School

#### SCHOOL PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Dear Institutional Review Board:

The purpose of this letter is to inform you that I give Heath Brewer, Assistant Principal, Union Middle School permission to conduct the research titled *Developing a comprehensive program for EL instruction at the individual school level: A challenge in Sampson County Schools* at Union Intermediate School. This also serves as assurance that this school complies with requirements of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) (see back for specific requirements) and will ensure that these requirements are followed in the conduct of this research.

Sincerely,



Mr. Jim Workman  
Principal, Union Intermediate School

# SCHOOL PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Dear Institutional Review Board:

The purpose of this letter is to inform you that I give Heath Brewer, Assistant Principal, Union Middle School permission to conduct the research titled *Developing a comprehensive program for EL instruction at the individual school level: A challenge in Sampson County Schools* at Union Elementary School. This also serves as assurance that this school complies with requirements of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) (see back for specific requirements) and will ensure that these requirements are followed in the conduct of this research.

Sincerely,



Ms. Dondi Hobbs  
Principal, Union Elementary School

## APPENDIX C: EL PLAN OF INSTRUCTION

<b>Reading: Literature</b>	
CCR Anchor Standard RL.1 – Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.	<p><b>Strategies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• QAR (question answer relationship)</li><li>• Directed Reading and Thinking Activity (DRTA)</li><li>• Inference graphic organizers, thinking maps</li><li>• Activation of prior knowledge</li><li>• Use anchor charts</li><li>• Use cards, pictures, photos</li><li>• Thought bubbles with text</li><li>• Games</li><li>• Teach specific inferences</li><li>• Sentence starters and sentence frames to start an inference</li></ul> <p>(P. Carrion, personal communication, October 11, 2018)</p>
	<p><b>Resources</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• SIOP Strategies (Vogt &amp; Echevarria, 2007)</li><li>• Inferential Reading Comprehension Considerations Packet Webs (William &amp; Mary Training and Technical Assistance Center, 2002) <a href="https://education.wm.edu/centers/ttac/documents/packets/inferential.pdf">https://education.wm.edu/centers/ttac/documents/packets/inferential.pdf</a></li><li>• YouTube videos</li><li>• 2017 NCSCOS ELA Resources (NC Department of Public Instruction, 2017a)<a href="https://www.livebinders.com/play/play/2349342?tabid=9f7303a3-6901-5e27-8b53-b58089a9cd43">https://www.livebinders.com/play/play/2349342?tabid=9f7303a3-6901-5e27-8b53-b58089a9cd43</a></li></ul> <p>(P. Carrion, personal communication, October 11, 2018)</p>



<p>CCR Anchor Standard RL.2 – Determine central ideas (RI) or themes (RL) of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.</p>	<p><b>Strategies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduce challenging vocabulary words.</li> <li>• Provide an explanation, and the meaning for each word before they begin to read the story.</li> <li>• Allow students to have an oral discussion</li> <li>• Provide time for students to write the details for each paragraph.</li> <li>• Use a graphic organizer to assist students in identifying main ideas and supporting details.</li> <li>• Allow ELLs to use their native language to talk, or write, about the story.</li> <li>• Teachers may choose to first model the first paragraph and let students work in small groups as they find the main idea.</li> <li>• Encourage students to read the story/book several times.</li> <li>• Have an initial reading and discussion.</li> <li>• Ask students to read the text a second time, and encourage them to take notes.</li> <li>• Have students paraphrase their own notes to help them better understand the main idea.</li> <li>• Hold a group discussion to share ideas about the main idea of the story/book.</li> </ul> <p>(P. Carrion, personal communication, October 11, 2018)</p>
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<p>CCR Anchor Standard RL.3 – Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.</p>	<p><b>Strategies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• QAR (question answer relationship)</li> <li>• Think and Search</li> <li>• Sequence graphic organizer</li> <li>• Word sorts</li> <li>• Decision tree</li> <li>• Text Aids</li> <li>• Investigative reporting</li> <li>• Compare and contrast chart</li> <li>• CSR (Collaborative Strategy Reading)</li> </ul> <p>(J. Roa, personal communication, October 10,2018)</p>
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<p>CCR Anchor Standard RL.4 – Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.</p>	<p><b>Strategies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Four Square Vocabulary Grid</li> <li>• Text Aids</li> <li>• Investigative Reporting</li> <li>• Summary Frames</li> <li>• Reading for the Gist</li> </ul> <p>(J. Roa, personal communication, October 10,2018)</p>
	<p><b>Resources</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SIOP Strategies (Vogt &amp; Echevarria, 2007)</li> <li>• Jeopardy Game (Sony Pictures Entertainment, Inc., 2018)</li> <li>• Illustrations (NC Department of Public Instruction, 2017a)</li> <li>• Hamburger game (The Pennsylvania State University, 2016)</li> <li>• Word Webs (William &amp; Mary Training and Technical Assistance Center, 2002)</li> <li>• Internet Hunts (NC Department of Public Instruction, 2017a)</li> <li>• Compare/Contrast Photos (NC Department of Public Instruction, 2017a)</li> <li>• Sequence Sentence Strips (NC Department of Public Instruction, 2017a)</li> <li>• Cause and Effect T-Chart (NC Department of Public Instruction, 2017a)</li> <li>• www.wordle.com (Google, 2018)</li> </ul> <p>(J. Roa, personal communication, October 10,2018)</p>

<p>CCR Anchor Standard RL.5 – Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.</p>	<p><b>Strategies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Description</li> <li>• Sequence</li> <li>• Problem and Solution</li> <li>• Cause and Effect</li> <li>• Compare and contrast</li> <li>• Skimming</li> <li>• Text structure creation activities</li> <li>• Underlining/highlighting/circling keywords</li> </ul> <p>(W. Santivanez, personal communication, October 13,2018)</p>
	<p><b>Resources</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SIOP Strategies (Vogt &amp; Echevarria, 2007)</li> <li>• ReadWorks.org (2019)</li> <li>• Quizlet.com (Quizlet, Inc., 2018)</li> <li>• 2017 NCSCOS ELA Resources (NC Department of Public Instruction, 2017a)  <a href="https://www.livebinders.com/play/play/2349342?tabid=9f7303a3-6901-5e27-8b53-b58089a9cd43">https://www.livebinders.com/play/play/2349342?tabid=9f7303a3-6901-5e27-8b53-b58089a9cd43</a> </li> </ul> <p>(W. Santivanez, personal communication, October 13,2018)</p>

<p>CCR Anchor Standard RL.6 – Assess how point of view, perspective, or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.</p>	<p><b>Strategies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fact vs. opinion discussion</li> <li>• Create skits</li> </ul> <p>(W. Santivanez, personal communication, October 13,2018)</p>
	<p><b>Resources</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SIOP Strategies (Vogt &amp; Echevarria, 2007)</li> <li>• ReadWorks.org (2019)</li> <li>• Quizlet.com (Quizlet, Inc., 2018)</li> <li>• 2017 NCSCOS ELA Resources (NC Department of Public Instruction, 2017a)  <a href="https://www.livebinders.com/play/play/2349342?tabid=9f7303a3-6901-5e27-8b53-b58089a9cd43">https://www.livebinders.com/play/play/2349342?tabid=9f7303a3-6901-5e27-8b53-b58089a9cd43</a></li> </ul> <p>(W. Santivanez, personal communication, October 13,2018)</p>

<p>CCR Anchor Standard RL.7 – Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.</p>	<p><b>Strategies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify how illustrations and texts are related.</li> <li>• Compare and contrast illustrations with a particular story element</li> <li>• Posters</li> <li>• Graphic Organizers</li> <li>• Maps</li> </ul> <p>(M. Pena, personal communication, October 13,2018)</p>
	<p><b>Resources</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SIOP Strategies (Vogt &amp; Echevarria, 2007)</li> <li>• 2017 NCSCOS ELA Resources (NC Department of Public Instruction, 2017a)</li> </ul> <p><a href="https://www.livebinders.com/play/play/2349342?tabid=9f7303a3-6901-5e27-8b53-b58089a9cd43">https://www.livebinders.com/play/play/2349342?tabid=9f7303a3-6901-5e27-8b53-b58089a9cd43</a></p> <p>(M. Pena, personal communication, October 13,2018)</p>

<p>CCR Anchor Standard RL.8 – Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.</p>	<p><b>Strategies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share personal experiences and responses to experiences with text: discussing interpretations, recording personal responses. Identify the reasons an author gives to support ideas in a text</li> <li>• Story maps</li> <li>• Formative assessment</li> <li>• Reading comprehension</li> </ul> <p>(M. Pena, personal communication, October 13,2018)</p>
	<p><b>Resources</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SIOP Strategies (Vogt &amp; Echevarria, 2007)</li> <li>• 2017 NCSCOS ELA Resources (NC Department of Public Instruction, 2017a)  <a href="https://www.livebinders.com/play/play/2349342?tabid=9f7303a3-6901-5e27-8b53-b58089a9cd43">https://www.livebinders.com/play/play/2349342?tabid=9f7303a3-6901-5e27-8b53-b58089a9cd43</a></li> </ul> <p>(M. Pena, personal communication, October 13,2018)</p>

<p>CCR Anchor Standard RL.9 – Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.</p>	<p><b>Strategies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General academic vocabulary</li> <li>• Make comparisons</li> <li>• Circle or highlight academic words</li> <li>• Word hunts</li> <li>• Think aloud activities</li> <li>• Highlight cognates</li> <li>• Content-specific vocabulary</li> <li>• Visual aids</li> <li>• Diagrams</li> <li>• Word cards</li> <li>• Highlight cognates</li> <li>• Venn diagrams</li> <li>• T-charts</li> <li>• Rating and Ranking</li> <li>• Foldables</li> </ul> <p>(R. Unas, personal communication, October 9,2018)</p>
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<p>CCR Anchor Standard RL.10 – Read and understand complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently, connecting prior knowledge and experiences to text.</p>	<p><b>Strategies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Link text to student</li> <li>• Link text to world</li> <li>• Link text to prior learning</li> <li>• Use and encourage storytelling in the classroom based on concepts</li> <li>• Use stories about the concept from other cultural backgrounds</li> <li>• Concept maps</li> <li>• KWL Charts</li> <li>• Pre-assessment journaling</li> </ul> <p>(R. Unas, personal communication, October 9,2018)</p>
	<p><b>Resources</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SIOP Strategies (Vogt &amp; Echevarria, 2007)</li> <li>• 2017 NCSCOS ELA Resources (NC Department of Public Instruction, 2017a)  <a href="https://www.livebinders.com/play/play/2349342?tabid=9f7303a3-6901-5e27-8b53-b58089a9cd43">https://www.livebinders.com/play/play/2349342?tabid=9f7303a3-6901-5e27-8b53-b58089a9cd43</a> </li> </ul> <p>(R. Unas, personal communication, October 9,2018)</p>

<b>Reading: Informational Text</b>	
<p>CCR Anchor Standard RI.1 – Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.</p>	<p><b>Strategies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• QAR (question answer relationship)</li> <li>• Directed Reading and Thinking Activity (DRTA)</li> <li>• Inference graphic organizers, thinking maps</li> <li>• Activation of prior knowledge</li> <li>• Use anchor charts</li> <li>• Use cards, pictures, photos</li> <li>• Thought bubbles with text</li> <li>• Games</li> <li>• Teach specific inferences</li> <li>• Sentence starters and sentence frames to start an inference</li> </ul> <p>(P. Carrion, personal communication, October 11, 2018)</p>
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<p>CCR Anchor Standard RI.2 – Determine central ideas (RI) or themes (RL) of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.</p>	<p><b>Strategies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduce challenging vocabulary words.</li> <li>• Provide an explanation, and the meaning for each word before they begin to read the story.</li> <li>• Allow students to have an oral discussion</li> <li>• Provide time for students to write the details for each paragraph.</li> <li>• Use a graphic organizer to assist students in identifying main ideas and supporting details.</li> <li>• Allow ELLs to use their native language to talk, or write, about the story.</li> <li>• Teachers may choose to first model the first paragraph and let students work in small groups as they find the main idea.</li> <li>• Encourage students to read the story/book several times.</li> <li>• Have an initial reading and discussion.</li> <li>• Ask students to read the text a second time, and encourage them to take notes.</li> <li>• Have students paraphrase their own notes to help them better understand the main idea.</li> <li>• Hold a group discussion to share ideas about the main idea of the story/book.</li> </ul> <p>(P. Carrion, personal communication, October 11, 2018)</p>
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<p>CCR Anchor Standard RI.6 – Assess how point of view, perspective, or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.</p>	<p><b>Strategies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fact vs. opinion discussion</li> <li>• Create skits</li> </ul> <p>(W. Santivanez, personal communication, October 13,2018)</p>
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<p>CCR Anchor Standard RI.7 – Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.</p>	<p><b>Strategies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Graphic Organizers</i></li> <li>• Identify how illustrations and texts are related.</li> <li>• Compare and contrast illustrations with a particular story element</li> <li>• Posters</li> <li>• Maps</li> <li>• Technological Instruction</li> </ul> <p>(M. Pena, personal communication, October 13,2018)</p> <p><b>Resources</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SIOP Strategies (Vogt &amp; Echevarria, 2007)</li> <li>• 2017 NCSCOS ELA Resources (NC Department of Public Instruction, 2017a)  <a href="https://www.livebinders.com/play/play/2349342?tabid=9f7303a3-6901-5e27-8b53-b58089a9cd43">https://www.livebinders.com/play/play/2349342?tabid=9f7303a3-6901-5e27-8b53-b58089a9cd43</a></li> </ul> <p>(M. Pena, personal communication, October 13,2018)</p>
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<p>CCR Anchor Standard RI.8 – Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.</p>	<p><b>Strategies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Graphic Organizers</li> <li>• Identify how illustrations and texts are related.</li> <li>• Compare and contrast illustrations with a particular story element</li> <li>• Posters</li> <li>• Maps</li> <li>• Thinking Maps</li> <li>• Technological Instruction</li> </ul> <p>(M. Pena, personal communication, October 13,2018)</p> <p><b>Resources</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SIOP Strategies (Vogt &amp; Echevarria, 2007)</li> <li>• 2017 NCSCOS ELA Resources (NC Department of Public Instruction, 2017a)  <a href="https://www.livebinders.com/play/play/2349342?tabid=9f7303a3-6901-5e27-8b53-b58089a9cd43">https://www.livebinders.com/play/play/2349342?tabid=9f7303a3-6901-5e27-8b53-b58089a9cd43</a></li> </ul> <p>(M. Pena, personal communication, October 13,2018)</p>
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<p>CCR Anchor Standard RI.9 – Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.</p>	<p><b>Strategies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General academic vocabulary</li> <li>• Make comparisons</li> <li>• Circle or highlight academic words</li> <li>• Word hunts</li> <li>• Think aloud activities</li> <li>• Highlight cognates</li> <li>• Content-specific vocabulary</li> <li>• Visual aids</li> <li>• Diagrams</li> <li>• Word cards</li> <li>• Highlight cognates</li> <li>• Venn diagrams</li> <li>• T-charts</li> <li>• Rating and Ranking</li> <li>• Foldables</li> </ul> <p>(R. Unas, personal communication, October 9,2018)</p>
	<p><b>Resources</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SIOP Strategies (Vogt &amp; Echevarria, 2007)</li> <li>• 2017 NCSCOS ELA Resources (NC Department of Public Instruction, 2017a)  <a href="https://www.livebinders.com/play/play/2349342?tabid=9f7303a3-6901-5e27-8b53-b58089a9cd43">https://www.livebinders.com/play/play/2349342?tabid=9f7303a3-6901-5e27-8b53-b58089a9cd43</a></li> </ul> <p>(R. Unas, personal communication, October 9,2018)</p>

<p>CCR Anchor Standard RI.10 – Read and understand complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently, connecting prior knowledge and experiences to text.</p>	<p><b>Strategies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Link text to student</li> <li>• Link text to world</li> <li>• Link text to prior learning</li> <li>• Use and encourage storytelling in the classroom based on concepts</li> <li>• Use stories about the concept from other cultural backgrounds</li> <li>• Concept maps</li> <li>• KWL Charts</li> <li>• Pre-assessment journaling</li> </ul> <p>(R. Unas, personal communication, October 9,2018)</p>
	<p><b>Resources</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SIOP Strategies (Vogt &amp; Echevarria, 2007)</li> <li>• 2017 NCSCOS ELA Resources (NC Department of Public Instruction, 2017a)  <a href="https://www.livebinders.com/play/play/2349342?tabid=9f7303a3-6901-5e27-8b53-b58089a9cd43">https://www.livebinders.com/play/play/2349342?tabid=9f7303a3-6901-5e27-8b53-b58089a9cd43</a> </li> </ul> <p>(R. Unas, personal communication, October 9,2018)</p>

## APPENDIX D: EMAIL TO FEDERAL PROGRAMS DIRECTOR

**Heath Brewer**

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**From:** Heath Brewer  
**Sent:** Friday, October 19, 2018 2:57 PM  
**To:** Linda Jewel Carr  
**Cc:** Heath Brewer  
**Subject:** EL Plan of Instruction  
**Attachments:** EL Educational Plan of Instruction.docx

Good afternoon.

I started questioning whether this was going to come together or not with all of the breaks for severe weather... What do you think? It is taken from ELA Common Core Standards because it fits into every other curriculum area.

Please let me know.

Thanks in advance.

**Heath A. Brewer**  
**Assistant Principal/Athletic Director**  
**Union Middle School**  
**455 River Road**  
**Clinton, NC 28328**  
**910-592-4547, Ext. 37003**

*Let us tenderly and kindly cherish, therefore, the means of knowledge. Let us dare to read, think, speak, and write. -John Adams*

## APPENDIX E: EMAIL TO COUNTY CURRICULUM LEADERSHIP TEAM

**Heath Brewer**

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**From:** Heath Brewer  
**Sent:** Monday, October 22, 2018 9:55 AM  
**To:** Jeana Carr; Sheila Peterson  
**Cc:** Linda Jewel Carr; Heath Brewer  
**Subject:** EL Plan of Instruction  
**Attachments:** EL Educational Plan of Instruction.docx

Good morning.

In an effort to increase performance rates of our EL population in the Union District, EL teachers have been meeting with me to develop a plan of instructional practices which can be implemented by both EL teachers, as well as traditional classroom teachers. This effort was focused at the elementary and middle school grade levels due to similar testing requirements from the state and the cross-curricular nature of ELA standards. Attached are the fruits of this labor. Your input in this effort is critical. Please let me know what you think. I greatly appreciate it.

Thank you for your assistance.

**Heath A. Brewer**  
**Assistant Principal/Athletic Director**  
**Union Middle School**  
**455 River Road**  
**Clinton, NC 28328**  
**910-592-4547, Ext. 37003**

*Let us tenderly and kindly cherish, therefore, the means of knowledge. Let us dare to read, think, speak, and write. -John Adams*

## APPENDIX F: EMAIL RESPONSE

**Heath Brewer**

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**From:** Jeana Carr  
**Sent:** Monday, October 22, 2018 3:07 PM  
**To:** Heath Brewer; Sheila Peterson  
**Cc:** Linda Jewel Carr  
**Subject:** Re: EL Plan of Instruction

Hi Heath,

Looks like you all have been working hard and thanks for sharing it with me. There are some questions that come to mind as I am reading this information that I suggest as points to ponder and these may or may not be appropriate to your goal for this project:

~Do you intend for this to be an all inclusive list?

~Could there be some strategies that traditional classroom teachers have used with ELs that have worked for them that aren't mentioned here? I can think of some that those teachers may mention but again I am not sure if that is your intent.....

~Do they all need to be research based?

Technical items:

~I noticed Thinking Maps is capitalized in one place but not in another

~It looks like the list for RL.1 and RI.1 are the same and this pattern continues for all of the standards so I wondered if you could combine the standards, ex. RL.2/RI.2, RL.3/RI.3.

~You probably should also refer to them as NC SCoS Anchor Standards rather than CCR since the revision of the standards to be implemented this year are worded a little different than the previously adopted Common Core State Standards.

Not sure if this is what you were looking for as to feedback but as I said, these were some things that jumped out at me when reading it.

Thanks and good luck with everything!

*"Proactive people are driven by values--carefully thought about, selected and internalized values."*

Jeana Westbrook Carr, M.Ed./M.S.A  
Sampson County Schools  
Director of Elementary Education  
PO Box 439  
Clinton, NC 28329  
910-592-1401 ext. 20122

## APPENDIX G: NC CHECK-IN 1 STATE ITEM DATA

[TNN](#) » [Forums](#) » [TNN News](#) » [NC Check-In 1 State Item Data Posted](#)



NC Check-In 1 State Item Data Posted

by [Kristen Maxey-Moore](#) - Thursday, 18 October 2018, 11:28 AM

### State Item Data

For 2018-19, NC Check-Ins were built from statewide field tested items and the data are derived from a representative sample of students from across the state. This data differ from previous NC Check-In data, which were run after testing was completed and was only comprised of data from the schools that administered the NC Check-Ins.

Please note that comparing results to state-level results is not particularly meaningful. Different schools and classes may be at different places in covering the content based on testing windows and calendars. The purpose of the NC Check-Ins is to provide individual and classroom level formative feedback. Comparisons to other classrooms, schools, or local education agencies (LEAs) is neither encouraged, nor advised. The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction is providing the state-level report for general information purposes only. It would be a misinterpretation for an LEA to conclude that their students performed better or worse than the state. The value in the NC Check-In results is for teachers to determine if their students have learned the content standards that were covered in their classrooms prior to the assessments.

